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NANETTE

AND HER LOVERS.

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NANETTE

AND HER LOVERS

A TALE OF NORMANDY.

By TALBOT GWYNNE,

Author of "The School for Fathers," "The Life and Death of Silas Barnstarke," &c. &c.

Josepha Heath Gulston

"Nothing is ill that is well taken."—SENECA.

"Quoi qu'il en soit, tôt ou tard, le fatal lendemain arrive."
SAINTE BEUVE.

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NANETTE

AND HER LOVERS.

LET the world wag as it listeth, Love will hold his way: let there be peace, or let there be war; let there be famine, or let there be plenty; let concord reign, or let revolution growl and strike; lovers will love on, intent on their own joys and woes, without much thought for aught beside each other.

Antoine Charpentier and Nanette Langlois were living examples of this truth.

It seemed as though dark and blood-thirsty fiends had been let loose in hordes to possess the greater part of the people of France: to push them on, yelling and scowling, through every stage of blasphemy and cruelty; and to blot every noble sentiment from their souls;

TRANSFER FROM C. U. APR

filling their spirits with boundless revolutionary depravity.

Antoine and Nanette, in the retired Norman village in which they were born, heard the distant rumbling of the storm of the great revolution: but they heard it with inattentive minds; their whole hearts being wrapped up in the idea of the marriage, which was about to crown the love that had grown in them since the days when, as children, they had played together in the green fields, beside the running streams, and beneath the fruitful apple-trees of their native province.

Paris was as a vast slaughter-house; or as the scene of an uninterrupted Sabbath in which witches and foul demons disported themselves. But the village of St. Eloy was serene and peaceful; untainted by the fever of the times: a fit spot for such lovers as the two young Normans.

The King of France was no more. His royal blood had deluged the scaffold; to be washed away by that of thousands of his subjects.

Antoine and his beloved, together with their fellow-villagers, had heard the dire news; but Antoine and his beloved, after giving a sigh and a tear to the fate of their monarch, returned to thoughts of their own happiness; whilst their fellow

villagers believed in their hearts that France, after having committed this crowning sin, would return to peaceful paths.

They little dreamt of all the horrors which were to follow during the reign of terror; that period of hot madness, and hydra-headed tyranny.

St. Eloy, the village in which Antoine and Nanette dwelt, was very small, and lying some miles from any other village, as well as from the high road, the inhabitants thereof were loyal, religious, and quite innocent of any "philosophical" notions, so called at that period.

"Delegates" had once or twice found their way to this primeval spot of earth, and had attempted to enlighten the minds of its inhabitants by their roaring, foaming rhetoric; but the sturdy Normans did not understand half they favoured them with, and looking on the rest to be something against their King, their seigneur, and M. le Curé, they plunged the ambulating philosophers head downwards into a muddy ditch; half suffocated them afterwards, by holding them under the village fountain to wash their "*jolis museaux*," and so kicked them like footballs from the hamlet.

What terrorists these Normans would have made, if they had but taken a turn that way!

As it was, they preferred standing by their own old modes. It was true that they had no reason to complain. Their country was fertile, and their seigneur, the Marquis de Vassy, exercised none of the vexatious rights with which he might have tormented them.

When the times had become troubled, and noble heads were hunted for, all the Marquis's aristocratic neighbours had either emigrated, or fallen into the hands of the people.

He was so quiet, so inoffensive, and so well beloved in his territory, that, up to the moment at which this tale begins, April, 1793, he had escaped the fate of other less fortunate nobles.

The villagers seldom saw de Vassy, excepting at mass on Sundays and fête days; but those who needed it felt the effects of his goodness, in the shape of alms and kind deeds, distributed and administered to them through the parish priest.

The seigneur was a disappointed, broken-hearted man. He had wasted the bright days of his youth in vain efforts to win the heart of a beautiful woman who detested him with deadly detestation. The more de Vassy loved, the more his idol hated; and the more she hated, the more he loved. This action and re-action so increased his passion, that it began

to tread on the heels of mania ; when small-pox, the beauty's dreaded foe, carried off the being for whom he was wasting away.

The Marquis sped from Paris, and flew to his château : the château which he had never seen since his boyhood. He found it vast ; deserted ; full of furniture of the preceding age ; the gardens and avenues overgrown with weeds ; but the house itself in good repair, thanks to its own solidity.

The seigneur arrived alone at the domain of his forefathers ; deeming that the old servants pensioned off at the château would be household enough for his wants. For months after his arrival he wandered about his house and grounds ; his eyes fixed on the earth ; his hands in his side pockets ; whilst he gently bit his under-lip, sighing from time to time long and deeply.

The village curé was the only being de Vassy would see, and he was at first received by the Marquis coldly ; this coldness being now and then varied by little bursts of sarcastic pettishness ; the two forming a whole disagreeable enough to have rebuffed any one but a good man bent upon doing his duty.

The curé had seen at once that the seigneur was oppressed in mind, and that his heart was arid and

void of hope ; wherefore, in spite of de Vassy's coldness and sarcasms, he worked gently and firmly at his reformation and comforting ; beginning by little and little, and not suffering himself to be either daunted or disgusted by the Marquis's modes towards him.

This curé was a man of great common sense and of straightforward simplicity of mind. His manners had still, at the age of fifty, all the *gaucherie* of those of a young seminarist; giving him an air of irresolution and timidity ; which would have led persons, who only looked at the surface, to have given him credit for far less sense and penetration than he really possessed.

In person he was tall and lean; with an exaggeration of the ecclesiastical stoop proceeding from the feebleness of his long back. His face was deeply marked by the small-pox, whilst his sallow complexion was made to look still more yellow than it really was by contrast with his snowy-white hair-powder.

M. le curé was decidedly a very ugly man ; yet the meek and patient expression of his faded grey eyes shed an amiability over his countenance, which caused his lanky jaws and the red tip of his pinched nose to be forgotten. His voice was gentle and soft, with a touch of melancholy about it, very soothing

to the soul of de Vassy; who, after a while, liked to hear that low, smooth voice sounding in his ears, even when he did not attend to the words so patiently and perseveringly repeated by the speaker: who still hoped, day by day, that they might reach his hearer's soul.

The curé's righteous hopes were not disappointed. From merely allowing the priest's voice to murmur to his outward sense, whilst he pondered morbidly and moodily over the past, de Vassy by degrees caught a word here and there of the curé's speech; then a sentence, and in time yet more.

He would repeat the words to himself mechanically when he was alone; then he would stop suddenly in his slow and gloomy pacings to and fro, examine the words he had repeated, and look into their meaning. He at first laughed at them, and ridiculed the poor priest at their next meeting for the extravagance of his ideas.

The Marquis did this with the grand air for which he had always been remarkable; the curé blushing the while, as he smiled, and his heart beat with joy. The seigneur had heard his words, had remembered them; that was a step gained; the thought of which cheered the curé for many a long day, as he toiled at his pastoral duties.

The priest encouraged the Marquis to laugh at him; deeming that to be better than fixed looks, heavy sighs, and depressing pondering. He moreover rejoiced when de Vassy began to argue with him; and his happiness and delight were extreme, when, from doing so superciliously and carelessly, the seigneur took a gradual interest in enforcing his own ideas, and in trying to pose the priest.

"I shall save him!" said the good man to himself; and so he did: but it took him a whole lustre of toil and patient waiting to compass his charitable ends.

The Marquis de Vassy had reached his estate, when he fled from Paris and from the world, with his mind disordered; his heart rebellious and full of frantic blasphemous repining; death by suicide appearing to his disorganised soul the only refuge from his woes: and yet as the cold iron of the pistol-barrel chilled his bare breast, his hand shook; and he dared not pull the trigger that would rid him at once of life and misery.

At the end of five years he was completely changed.

The poor and humble curé had caused him to think of mispent youth; as much mispent in a vain and mad idolatry, ruinous to the peace of his soul, as though he had passed it in dazzling and seducing immorality,

The priest had brought the seigneur to think on the real and pinching griefs and miseries which it was *his* lot to look upon every day of his life. The tale of such sorrows and poverty brought a blush to de Vassy's cheek, and a tear to his eye.

"For heaven's sake, M. le curé," he would cry, "take my purse and empty it, over and over again, among those wretched people; but don't talk to me about them: it freezes my blood to hear you!"

"You are their seigneur, M. le Marquis, and it is your duty to watch over them, and to know of, as well as to remedy, their unhappiness. You have lived enough to vanity; your whole life would not be too long to show forth your repentance by your good deeds: they will calm your spirit, and heal your wounds beyond aught else on earth."

It was a strange sight to see the handsome, high-bred noble listening, after a while, meekly and with interest to the country curé. The awkward priest, in his long thread-bare *soutane* and rusty sash, sat on the very edge of his chair; his long, thin, blue hands, with the red knuckles clasped on his lean knees; whilst the Marquis leant back easily in his fauteuil, his beautiful white hands emerging from the delicate lace ruffles; one of them mechanically playing with his *jabot*, the other reposing on the arm of his

chair. The two men differed as much in appearance as did de Vassy's soft, black velvet raiment and diamond solitaire, from the humble pastor's well-worn but neat garment, and the ring, made of his mother's snow-white hair, which the curé wore on his forefinger.

The Marquis, by his friend's advice, plunged into mathematics when alone; and amused his leisure by long games of chess when the curé's daily labours were over.

De Vassy was melancholy but serene.—A sense of duty was gaining ground in him: he began to view his early life with contempt and horror, as he meditated on what he was, and on what he might have been. A pure and unalloyed delight spread within the curé's breast, when he felt that he had freed the Marquis from the tangled thicket in which he had so long wandered; and that he had, at last, set him in the road to peace and increasing happiness.

It was on the last day of April that the two friends—for very friends they were—walked slowly up and down the long wide terrace of the château: there breathing the soft evening air, charged with the sweet scent of violets and lilacs. As they paced to and fro, they fought their just finished game of chess over again; stopping ever and anon to canvass di-

vers moves, and using much action in so doing. From chess they proceeded to talk of the times; and the probable end of the bloodshed and confusion then rife.

The Marquis looked up at the high roofs of his house and turrets, and at their many *girouettes*, all coming out in relief against the dark blue evening sky; whilst the grey stone of the building looked ruddy beneath the rays of the sinking sun.

"It is wonderful, M. le curé," he said, "that you and I should have escaped, so far, from the honour of a visit from the *patriots;* you with your *soutane* and *calotte*, and I with my *girouettes:* for *girouettes* seem to be deemed especial enemies to the good of the country."

"Heaven send us safe through the storm! I have made up my mind never to quit my post, until I am either driven from it, or murdered."

"You have a noble heart, M. le curé—I too will never fly before *canaille*. They can but kill me; and a man *must* die one fine day: a little sooner or a little later, what does it signify?"

"When a man is properly prepared to die, M. le Marquis, he should await the awful moment without fear and without impatience."

"I hope so to do, thanks to you, my friend. I

could not have said so before I had the happiness of knowing you: then, I both longed and feared to die."

The Marquis sighed as he said these words; and there was a short silence between the noble and the village pastor.

"Let us take a turn in the wood, and listen to our opera singers in feathers, M. le curé."

The seigneur, so saying, left the terrace, followed by his companion, who replied: "With all my heart, M. le Marquis; and in the wood I fear I must leave you. It is Saturday evening, and I must get to bed early, that I may be up betimes in the morning. I suppose you are aware that your protégés, Antoine Charpentier and Nanette Langlois, are to be married to-morrow?"

"Yes.—Ah! my friend, if I say I envy them their happiness you will say I am committing a sin; so I will only observe that I cannot imagine a greater happiness than theirs!"

"They deserve it, M. le Marquis. Antoine, in good hands, will probably be an honest man; but he is likely to be led away by pleasure and bad example, if he has the misfortune to meet with either the one or the other. As for Nanette, that dear child is fit to be a Saint in heaven."

The seigneur and the curé descended the avenue, crossed the road at the end of it, and having walked some way in the wood, seated themselves on a mossy bank to listen to hundreds of birds, both far and near, singing their evening songs in their clear ringing tones. Some of these round notes seemed to come from the heavens themselves, being chaunted from the top of high oaks : oaks that had grown from century to century, till from saplings smooth and supple, they had become the stiff-limbed, knotted giants of the wood.

A blood-red shower of sunbeams bursting from an opening, lighted the pathway and the huge trunks of the trees that bordered it.

Neither of the friends spoke ; they were too intent on seeing and hearing.

Suddenly the sunbeams that lighted up the path with so rich a light, were for an instant intercepted ; and from a road which crossed the path appeared Antoine and Nanette, hand in hand.

On seeing their seigneur and their pastor, Antoine pulled off his broad-brimmed hat, and made his best, but rustic, bow : Nanette curtsied, blushing modestly, and casting down her eyes as she did so.

"*Bon soir, mes enfans !*" cried those whom they had thus saluted ; the two lovers, going on their

way, gave place to the red beams of the setting sun, and followed the road that led towards the village. Antoine, however, lagged behind for a moment, and raising his hat, said: "*A demain, M. le curé, n'est-ce pas?*" showing his white teeth in a broad smile of delight, as he pronounced the words.

By the road, the château was about a mile and a half from the village; but through the wood and across the meads, there was but a mile between them.

Through the wood and across the meads, the two young villagers took their way; talking, as they went, of the happy future, which seemed to spread, full of joy and peace, before them.

The Marquis de Vassy had given a small farm, with a due portion of land, as Nanette's "*dot.*" In this farm they were to take up their abode on the morrow; and there Nanette's mother, la veuve Langlois, the halest, merriest old lady in all the village, was in due time to be quartered with them.

Nanette was but nineteen; a beautiful little country girl, fresh and ruddy; with large, melancholy dark eyes, small mouth, and hair like the raven's wing. Her expression was soft and tender; that of Antoine, on the contrary, was lively and full of fun: his piercing black eyes were fiery and restless; if

the look of gaiety had left them, they might have been thought fierce.

Antoine was broad-shouldered, strong, active, well-made, and of middle height.

His hair was black and curly; his complexion brown, with a slight ruddy tinge on the cheeks; his mouth was well-shaped, though large, and his teeth were as even and white as it is possible for teeth to be.

He wore a dark-grey jacket and breeches, yellow waistcoat, blue stockings, and a pair of black sabots decked with a piece of black sheepskin.

Nanette also was shod with the same foot-gear; her bright blue stocking with red clocks showed off her well-made leg to the greatest advantage; a dark blue petticoat striped with black, a red bodice, together with a snow-white kerchief and Norman cap, all lent their aid in setting off her fresh, rustic beauty.

As Antoine and his *fiancée* drew near the village, they passed the little farm with its fruitful orchard, which were to be theirs. The house was framed of oak, filled up with bricks and plaster; having an overhanging top story, and some old carving about the gable.

They stopped awhile to look at it; then turned to

pursue their way. As they did so, a young man rode up to them on a hard trotting Norman nag.

"Why, where are you going, Arsène? You look as though you were off on a journey!" cried Antoine, as the young man stopped his horse on drawing near.

"So I am. I'm going to Rouen on some business for my father; money business."

"And our wedding; and the feast; and the dance? Shall you be back in time for all that?"

Arsène Potier shook his head; blushed; said, in a trembling voice:

"*Bon soir, Ma'mselle Nanette,*" and so trotted off.

"I don't understand that boy," cried Antoine, looking after him; "he's not what he was when we used to go bird's nesting together in order to see who could find most eggs for you, Nanette. I think he's growing into what my father calls a *microscope*, or a mi*stan*thrope, or something that ends in *ope*."

Nanette only answered by saying:

"I think we had better make haste, or we shall be late for supper." But she knew well enough what was the matter with Arsène Potier: and she pitied him with all her heart.

Arsène and Antoine were within a few months of the same age; Antoine being just under two-and-

twenty, whilst Arsène had just passed those years. They were born in the same village, and had always been the friends and playmates of each other, and of Nanette. As childhood passed away and youth drew near, from friends and playmates Antoine and Nanette merged into lovers, still looking on Arsène as the dearest friend of each; whilst he, poor fellow, entertained a passion for Nanette, even stronger and more tender than that which Antoine felt for her. Being a straightforward, sensible young man, he soon saw that his love for his former playmate was without hope; and that Antoine was the well-beloved of Nanette. From being cheerful and happy, as of old, he became sad and abstracted; not trying to get rid of the passion that gnawed at his heart, but striving to bear it patiently. It was all this which so puzzled Antoine; making him fear that his friend was turning into a "*microscope.*"

Nanette felt and knew how the case stood with Arsène, whom she still loved as a true friend; whilst her heart was Antoine's past redemption.

She rejoiced that Arsène had spared himself the pain of being at her wedding; and of assisting, sad and forlorn, at the subsequent noisy festivities.

He trotted on, with his heavy club-stick, the large end downwards, dangling at his wrist; the deep lea-

ther waist-purse buckled around him; his thick leather gaiters standing above his knee like jack-boots: —a handsome and comely young man, in spite of Nanette's preference for Antoine.

Arsène was tall and stout; fair-skinned, with bright, prominent blue eyes, and golden hair; which, hanging long on each side his face, was cut straight across his forehead.

Antoine was considered the handsomest and most sprightly young man of St. Eloy; Arsène the strongest and the most sensible.

No gaiety was thought to go on properly without Antoine, who went by the cognomen of *not' boute-en-train;* whilst Arsène was but a very second-rate personage where gay doings were in the case: although he had often had the honour of being consulted in grave matters, by men of twice his own age.

There was not a man in St. Eloy could sing, dance, or play the violin like Antoine: there was not one who could manage a horse or wrestle like Arsène.

He had oft-times accepted wrestling challenges from far distant villages, and had ever come off victor; though he had never been known to send one himself.

Antoine's father was schoolmaster, sacristan, and

moreover a serpent-player at the *lutrin;* at which also young Charpentier sang, to the admiration of all the parish.

Arsène's father was a miller, owning a fine water-mill on the little river that wound along without the village; and beside which Arsène sauntered with downcast eyes, when his daily toil was done; for he knew that the two *fiancées* were strolling through meadows and woods, side by side, full of love and happiness.

In that very river too, he had taken fine fish enough to form a large dish for the wedding festival; a gift not to be despised at any time, but more especially in those days of scarcity.

The veuve Langlois had just received the young miller's present, as her daughter and her future son-in-law reached her home.

The merry old woman was ecstasising over the size and beauty of the dozen and a half fine silvery fish in a basket lined with long grass; and from which she was taking them, one by one, with a fresh exclamation for each.

Maître Charpentier was present, having been called from his abode next door to view the treasure, and to partake of it in anticipation; and there he stood—a newspaper in one hand, in the other the old-

fashioned horn spectacles, that usually sat astride on his short, turned-up nose, just above the nostrils.

"*Arrivez mes enfans, arrivez!*" cried the veuve Langlois holding up a slippery fish in each hand, and darting forward to kiss her daughter and Antoine. "Look, Nanette, my *cocotte*, what Arsène has sent for our feast to-morrow! He can't come himself: *le papa* Potier has sent him to Rouen on affairs, poor child; so he has caught these to represent him. Eighteen beautiful monsters! How shall we dress them? The three eels shall be *en matelotte;* and the trout? We'll think of that whilst we sup. You and Antoine *must* stay and sup with us, Maître Charpentier; and as provisions are scarce, suppose we go and bring your supper in here."

The snow-white cloth was soon spread, and on it were placed the loaf and the cheese, a pot of *confiture* from the schoolmaster's, and a Neufchâtel cheese and lettuce from the same quarter; all of which, with a jug of rough cider, made a very respectable show.

Nanette, however, would not think of supping until she had coaxed la veuve Langlois out of the two smallest of Arsène's present of fish for M. le curé: "*qui est si pauvre et si bon*," she said. Having run to the parsonage with her little gift, she returned to take her place between her mother and her lover, and

supper began; not, however, till Madame Langlois had given a saucer-full of bread and cider to her cat, Croquemitaine: bread and cider being a very favourite repast of Norman Croquemitaines.

Maître Charpentier, at starting, croaked a little about the state of France: but the widow, tapping his large wide hand with the back of her knife, informed him that nothing miserable must be spoken of on that evening; after which reproof, conversation went on gaily, as the large loaf, the cider, and the other component parts of the little feast gradually disappeared.

The innocent conviviality of the evening was checked for a short space by treachery on the part of Croquemitaine. That round headed, soft-coated, large-eyed, agile creature, having dispatched her bread and cider, had stolen up softly—softly—softly to the basket of fish; into which she, with rounded back and sly mien, was just plunging her white paw; when Maître Charpentier, with the large bit of bread coated with Neufchâtel cheese which he was in the act of carrying to his mouth, pointed her out.

Dead-awakening shrieks from the veuve Langlois scared Croquemitaine from her intended inroad into Arsène's gift. The huge loaf was hurled at the thief by Maître Charpentier; the thief, with crooked tail,

an India-rubber bound, and a "*Pzizt*" of disgust, dodged the loaf, and sped from the house up the next apple-tree: the fish was found to be intact, and order was restored; though, *Coquine—voleuse—je te conseille de recommencer*," &c., &c., burst from the widow from time to time.

The hour of parting for the night arrived; nine o'clock having pealed forth from the village steeple.

Nanette and her mother walked through their little orchard, some fifty paces long, to shut the gate after their visitors. Maître Charpentier insisted on An toine kissing his *fiancée*.

Nanette, with a blush, unseen by starlight, turned her cheek to Antoine, who deposited a loving, noisy kiss thereon; which being done, the old schoolmaster, saying that he himself had once been young, under cover of that excuse must needs embrace her too; making a long Latin quotation, in false quantities.

The widow reproved him for speaking in classic tongue: "*Fi donc, mon voisin, on ne parle Latin qu'à la messe!*"

The house was shut up; la veuve Langlois retired to her room with Tonton, the fat white puppy, in her apron; embraced Nanette; cried over her; laughed, and dismissed her for the night.

Nanette, alone in her own room, sat awhile on the side of her little bed with the checked curtains; her hands clasped, and a happy smile on her lips.

What her reflections were, we will not pretend to say.

After a while she arose, and, from an old oak chest in which she kept her holiday garb and all her little treasures, she drew forth a scarlet petticoat with dark-green bodice, a pair of smart shoes with small steel buckles, a muslin neckerchief, and a splendid Norman cap, high as a grenadier's; which cap was embroidered in silver, the long wings being worked, and trimmed with lace.

All these wedding decorations she laid out upon her bed, together with the beautiful and curious cross and heart worn by the Norman women; which last were a gift from the old schoolmaster, who on his knees had given them to *his fiancée*, the night before his own wedding.

Nanette, enchanted, gazed on her costume; then, taking the cap in her hand, she poised it with admiration: as a certain classical hero, of pious memory, is reported to have poised and admired the helmet presented to him by beautiful Venus.

From poising the cap, Nanette proceeded to try it on; holding her candle aloft, and viewing, in her lit-

tle oval glass dim with age, the effect produced by herself and her head-dress.

She must have been well pleased with the reflection before her; for she smiled, and said half aloud:

Il me trouvera joli comme ça!"

Antoine, at that instant, was just composing himself to sleep; after having surveyed the new hat, green jacket and breeches, white silk stockings, white waistcoat, shoes and buckles, and steel watch-chain, in all of which he was to shine forth on the following morning as *the* bridegroom: dazzling to all beholders.

He was soon asleep, and dreaming of Nanette. The whole village too was plunged in slumber; not one of the inhabitants having dozed off without thinking of the next day's festivities: the young girls looking forward to the dancing, the old people to the feasting, the young men to both.

Nanette was the only human being awake in her native village.

Ten o'clock sounded: Nanette, one by one and with admiring looks, slowly put by her wedding decorations. She then busied herself with all the little fairings and gifts she had received since childhood; putting one aside as a keepsake for one young friend, another for another, and so on; but, being

unable to write, she could put no name to them : she meant that Antoine should fulfil that task for her.

Eleven o'clock struck.

Nanette started, ranged her presents on the lid of her chest, stepped to the window, and drawing back the curtain opened her lattice, to have one look at the bright stars, to listen for one minute to the nightingale ; and so to bed to dream of the morrow.

She looked out ; but drew back again, and clasped her hands together against her breast ; trembling violently.

She once more looked forth.

Her eyes had not deceived her—it was no mistake —it was a fatal reality !

The whole horizon was red and gleaming ; licking flames, and a whole column of lurid, rolling smoke, were mounting towards the heavens ;—the château of the Marquis de Vassy was one mass of fire.

Nanette could distinctly see the form of the building, standing entire, scarlet and glowing, amid the flames and smoke. Through the tranquil air she could hear the awful roaring of destruction ; whilst the nightingale in the tree beside her window sang his love-sick ditty, unconscious of human misery. Nanette thought, too, that she heard voices about the burning house.

The village and the château each stood on the top of a hill; the fire therefore was distinctly seen from the former.

Nanette listened. There was no sound of stirring in the hamlet. No! all was silent as the grave; and there was the huge fire burning with horrible might, whilst all around her were peacefully sleeping. —And the seigneur?

At thought of him, Nanette ran to her mother's door and awoke her; telling her that there was a fire in the distance.

"*Hein! que dis-tu là?*" cried a sleepy voice from beneath a coverlet.

On being fully aroused to a sense of what her daughter was saying, the veuve Langlois started up; showing herself at her chamber door, dressed in a *pierrot;* her head decked by a scarlet cotton handkerchief put on as a turban, with two ends like horns rising above her forehead.

She at once despatched Nanette to shake the schoolmaster-sacristan's cottage door; that he might arise, and announce "fire" to all in the land, by ringing the *tocsin.*

Anon they heard the old man come forth; whilst Antoine, after having called to Nanette not to be afraid, darted through the village shouting, "*Au feu!*

au feu ! "—as loud as his strong lungs would allow him.

His deep bass voice sounded startling and supernatural in the stillness of night, as he rushed along.

It awoke many a sleeper ; and presently the heavy clang of the *tocsin* aroused the remainder.

In a few minutes the sound of running, and that of excited voices, were to be heard in the village ; and in a short space of time not a man remained there but Maître Charpentier ; who still rang the *tocsin*, that dwellers in distant farms and houses might be alarmed, and carry help to the burning château.

Every one who left St. Eloy took one or more buckets with him ; and a body of the more hardy among the women followed, laden with blankets and trusses of straw, wherewith to aid in damming up water.

The curé led the way, full of anxiety on his friend's account.

The body of succour was obliged to take the road, though longer than the other route ; as they could not have passed through the wood with their burthens.

Antoine, however, sped that way, swift as a deer, in order to announce that help was at hand ; besides

which, his impatience to be at work among the flames would not suffer him to go with the rest.

The villagers of St. Eloy held on their way, all talking at once; every man giving his opinion, to which he could not convert his friends, as to how the fire must have arisen at the château.

The curé alone was silent. He walked on with drooping head; his hand in his breast, and his heart full of alarm for the safety of de Vassy.

Suddenly he stopt, and raising his hands cried: "*Chut, mes amis!*"

Silence succeeded to the noise of tongues.

"What can those cries and songs mean? Listen."

All stopt and listened.

Yells, shouts, singing, and the firing of guns reached their ears; mingling with the loud roaring of the flames, and the crackling and falling of huge burning beams.

Before a word was spoken, Antoine, panting and covered with sweat, bounded up to the listening party.

"Ah! M. le curé," he cried, seizing the priest's arm, trying to turn him, and to hurry him away: "you must not go to the château. The *sans culottes* are there: they have taken it and set fire to it. All the servants are killed; even poor old Mathieu the

gardener. I saw him hung up to a tree, and fired at like a mark!"

A cry of rage and horror burst from the loyal Normans on hearing Antoine's words.

"And the Marquis?" enquired the curé.

"Alas, M. le curé, I saw him lying on the ground tied hand and foot. There were two brigands with fixed bayonets keeping guard over him; and I heard a woman, *moustachée comme un dragon*, say to him, 'satellite of the tyrant, it will be fine fun to see you looking through the *national window*.' They are singing and dancing, and a good half of them are mad with drink—*'cré canaille, vas!*"

"My children," cried the curé, turning to his parishioners, "return to your families!—I will go and die with my friend!"

"Never, M. le curé, never!" shouted the countrymen, hemming him in.

"Besides," said Antoine, "you could do no good, M. le curé. The sight of a priest would only enrage them still more against our poor seigneur; and they might torture him to death at once. If they take him to prison, he may have a chance of escaping."

"You are right, Antoine," said the priest sadly; adding, "I shall never behold him on this earth again! *Allons! mes enfans*," he continued cheerfully,

after a pause; "let us return to our village: we can do nothing towards dispersing armed men, or saving the Marquis."

"They will soon be down upon *us* too! The sound of the *tocsin* drives them wild; they shake their fists and roar out, '*You're* ringing, are you? Ring away; we'll soon come and give you a midnight mass, you'll not forget to-morrow or next day.'"

"Change clothes with me, M. le curé," cried old Potier, the miller, on hearing these words of Antoine, "Get back as soon as you can; my wife will give you a horse. Fly, and save your life. I can take off your things as soon as I return; and if they catch me before, why I shall die doing a good deed; and that is something!"

"Thank you, *mon bon Potier*, a thousand thanks," cried the curé, brushing away the tear that dimmed his eye as the miller spoke. "No, I have resolved *never* to leave you all. May it please Heaven to allow me to die among you, even if my death be sudden and violent."

It was in vain that his parishioners tried all their rhetoric to persuade their priest to leave them. He returned with them to the village, where each man armed himself as best he could, fully determined to spill republican blood.

The curé having caused the *tocsin* to cease, went home.

He looked around his humble parsonage ; then with a sigh, but with a firm countenance, he took a light, and, proceeding to the church, he shut the door without fastening it ; kneeling down on the step of the altar to pray, and with a fearless heart to wait for death.

The curé had been but a short time before the altar when he heard the tramping of many feet. The sound ceased at the church door, and was succeeded by that of voices low, suppressed, but as of a multitude. The priest listened : the voices were not those of savage, excited enemies ; he could distinguish the tones of his own people ; wherefore, having arisen from his knees, he walked quickly and at once to the great door, and slowly opened it.

The moon was then shining in the heavens ; and by her cold, clear light, the curé beheld the youngest and strongest of the men of St. Eloy keeping guard before the portico of the church.

Some were armed with fowling-pieces, others had pickaxes and hatchets over their shoulders : there were also scythes firmly mounted on the end of strong sticks, which were to serve as weapons ; besides

pitchforks, and the heavy Norman sticks, clubbed and loaded at the nether end.

"My children, what are you doing here?" enquired the priest.

On hearing the gentle, well-known voice of their pastor, the men called out with one accord:

"We are come to save you, or to die for you, M. le curé! *Vive le Roi! A bas la République!*"

"Hush; hush! my good friends; and listen to my words: the last perhaps that you may ever hear from me! I thank you from the depths of my heart for your brave devotion to me; but your duty calls you to another quarter. You should be with your families in this hour of danger. I do not dread death, *mes chers frères;* and even your courage and magnanimity could not save me from it if I did. Antoine told us that the republicans were in number above a thousand men; besides furious women, more ferocious even than the men. What could you do, my brave friends, against such a body? You would exasperate them, and drive them to the most deplorable outrages! In peaceful, happy times, you have often reverently and obediently listened to my voice in this sacred temple. I know and feel that this is the last time that I shall ever give you counsel. Go

each man to his home ; let no one quit their dwelling : neither man, woman, nor child. In this manner you may perhaps save youserlves, and those who are dear to you. Hark ! I hear the distant roll of drums, the shouting and singing of the mob. They are drawing near. Kneel, my children, and receive my last blessing ; and may Heaven protect you!"

The Normans uncovered their heads, and knelt before the curé ; who blessed them composedly, and without the slightest tremor.

"*Adieu, mes amis, adieu!*" he cried, "here on earth we shall never meet again."

With these words the priest drew back, and was lost to sight in the darkness of the church ; shutting the heavy door as he disappeared, as though he had closed a sepulchre over his head.

The men dispersed sadly and in silence, each one to his home, there to await the event : ready to fight if necessary.

The curé again knelt down before the altar.

The church was in utter darkness, except a small space lighted by the feebly burning lamp above his head. He collected his ideas ; strengthening himself to meet the violent death he foresaw must be his. Then, rapid as thought, the whole of his life appeared before his mental sight ; from his first recollection

as a little child, up to the moment then so quickly flying. He could feel each event of past days as though it were present. He started from this short reverie, trying again to collect himself; for the solemn silence of the dark church was broken by the noise of the rattling drums of the republicans, and by the maniacal yelling of "*ça ira*," sung by a thousand roaring voices.

The priest was alone, unprotected, and his foes were at hand. There was nought to excite him! and for an instant human weakness got possession of soul and body. He feared and trembled: his heart beat loudly and heavily; and, covering his eyes with his cold hands, he cowered down and rested his forehead on the altar step.

The curé's weakness subdued him but for a short space. He raised his head; threw it back; pressed his hands to his breast; and such thoughts filled his mind, that he felt he could brave the worst tortures his enemies could put upon him.

The republican mob stood before the church door.

They expected to have found it barricaded, and they dealt hard blows upon it accordingly; when to their surprise it gave way at the first assault.

The priest heard them rush laughing, swearing, and blaspheming into the church.

He arose from his knees, and stepped up to the rails; there standing firmly and immovably to await his death.

The darkness had disappeared; links, burning branches and sticks, lighted up the building with a red and flickering glare.

The curé beheld a vast crowd of horrible faces, unshorn, dirty, covered with smoke — some with blood; frowning, grinning, menacing, defying and brutal: far different from the faces he was wont to behold in that place.

"Ah! ah! there he is!—there's the *calotin*, like a maggot in a shell."

"*A bas la robe noire!*—Confess your sins—confess you're a rascal and a tyrant!"

"Put him in the *boîte aux péchés* and shoot at him."

"Twist his head off."

"Oh! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira," &c. &c. &c.

"Allons enfans de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!"

Such like cries and songs filled the church, as the *sans culottes* rushed to the altar rail.

Two or three of them cleared it at a bound, and seized the unresisting priest.

"I am in your hands," he said meekly; "but before you stain your souls by a fresh crime, remember that murder will not go unpunished!"

Angry yells and roars of laughter saluted these words.

Two men with axes stepped from the rest and told the curé to kneel.

There was a moment of dead silence in the church: the republicans were preparing to enjoy the expected tragedy.

"My children," cried the priest firmly, and his voice was heard by all, "my children, I bless you with my dying breath! May Heaven send you repentance, and forgive you what you are about to do!"

With these words he knelt down, and leant his head on the rail, as on a block. He heard the roaring voices, the rattling drums; he prayed; and all was over!

The curé's head rolled on the pavement of the church; his body fell within the railing.

A sacrilegious hand seized the cross carried in processions, wrenched off the cross parts, and fixed the priest's head on the top of it.

The crowd opened to let the bearer of the bleeding trophy pass.

He rushed forth; and the pure moonbeams streamed on the holy head he bore.

The frantic mob, singing in triumph, marched after him; drums beating and torches flaring in hellish guise; whilst the church was again left to silence and darkness, with the headless body of the righteous man whose warm blood stained its sacred stones.

On the little square on which the church was built, stood a cart surrounded by some twenty men, as a guard. Several demoniacal-looking women were singing the Carmagnolle, and dancing around it; as happy peasants are represented around a maypole.

In the cart sat de Vassy, with pinioned arms and a stout rope about his ancles. His pale face looked death-like beneath the moon's rays; his hair was untied and dishevelled; the powder half shaken out of it. His expression was firm and calm: the insults, low jokes, the taunts and vile songs of the beings around him did not seem to reach his ears; much less to make any impression on his soul.

When the mob rushed howling from the church, the Marquis slowly turned his gaze upon them. On beholding the bleeding head of his friend borne aloft, he shut his eyes for an instant, and groaned as though in pain; then became as calm and impassible as though meditating alone, far from danger and death.

"*En avant!*" cried a strong voice, hoarse with shouting, and daily drams. "*Vive la république; vive la montagne!*"

The cry was taken up and amplified upon by the rest.

"*Vive la république! vive le sang! vive la guillotine.*"

"Allons enfans de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé."

They began their march; the Marseillaise being sung by them all, at the top of their voices.

First came drummers, male and female; next the long-bearded man in the red cap, carrying the priest's head; and then the cart with their prisoner.

Around and behind this cart swarmed the ferocious crowd.

"Let the *calotin* kiss the *aristocrat!*" shrieked a woman's voice.

At these words the remnant of the cross was lowered, and the dead curé's head brought on a level with the Marquis's face.

"*Embrassez-vous tyrans!*" again shrieked the woman.

"*Pauvre et bon ami!*" exclaimed de Vassy, half-aloud; as he reverently kissed the forehead of the gentle priest.

The trophy was again raised, amidst loud cries.

The seigneur cast down his eyes: his laced frill was scarlet with his friend's blood.

"*C'est le sang précieux d'un martyr!*" he said to himself with a sigh.

A halt was suddenly called, and a mighty cry raised, that the inhabitants of St. Eloy should come forth, and show their colours, by joining in the cry of "*Vive la république,*" or by refusing to do so.

No one but a bed-ridden old woman was allowed to remain beneath a roof: even a sick man was dragged forth, under pretence that he might be an aristocrat in disguise.

Antoine lustily swore that nothing on earth should make him shout for the republic. Nanette, with streaming tears, entreated him not to lose himself for three words; and not to cause her death, by his own inevitable destruction. She kissed his strong hand; he placed the other on her shoulder, saying: "*sois tranquille.*"

His turn came: a puny *sans culotte*, all cartridge-box and Phrygian cap, stept up to him, and committed a *bull* by saying:

"Now, *citoyen paysan; vive la république!*"

Nanette clung to Antoine's hand with both hers,

and looked up in his face, as though her life depended on that moment.

"*Vive la république,*" cried Antoine, loudly : "*et que le diable l'emporte !*" he added, beneath his breath.

All those who had any one depending on them, gave the republican shout, though against their consciences ; but "*Vive le roi,*" burst boldly and loudly from many others. Even some old men and women cut short their few remaining days, by uttering that old and loyal cry.

Day was breaking when the revolutionary procession left St. Eloy.

The poor old country-people who had cried "*Vive le roi,*" were tied hand and foot, and put into the cart with the Marquis ; the remaining self-condemned royalists were made to follow on foot.

By degrees, the sound of drums and singing died away in the distance ; leaving the village to the peaceful calm of early dawn, and the inhabitants to consternation and tears.

Nanette returned to her own room ; whilst la veuve Langlois and others took their way to the church.

The grey light of morning feebly lighted the large old Norman building, as the villagers softly and silently entered it ; every one dipping his hand

in the holy water, and signing himself as he did so.

They looked around, as though dreading to see that which their eyes were to behold.

Presently a low whisper was heard from old Potier; who, pointing with his brown and shrivelled hand towards the altar, showed the red pool before the chancel rail.

Sobs burst loudly from many of the poor curé's parishioners, when they saw his body lying headless and bleeding.

One by one they softly left the church. Maître Charpentier, with streaming eyes, locked the door; it being agreed that they should all meet again towards sunset, and carry their pastor to his lowly grave.

For the first time since the consecration of that old church in 1269, mass was not said beneath its roof. No jocund *carillon* sounded through the sunny air; no villagers, smart in their Sunday's best, were to be seen on the *place*, wending their way to the church, or talking together till it was time to go in. The jocund sounds of music and dancing were unheard on that day beneath the orchard trees.

The bright, warm May sun shone down upon St. Eloy, but not a living creature was to be seen: even

the dogs remained with their masters, as though they knew that some calamity had taken place.

With one accord, the whole village kept within doors till the time appointed for the priest's funeral.

The day was to have been one of happiness and gaiety; for Antoine and Nanette were to have been made one thereon.

Instead of the promised felicity, the bright day brought misery to both—and sad tears to Nanette.

"Ah!" she said to her mother, "the words we heard so often from poor M. le curé are true; as all his words were. He used to say that the happiness of this world is uncertain; and that the nearer or the greater it seems to be, the more uncertain it often is."

La veuve Langlois shook her head as she made answer:

"Poor man! I used to think those words very beautiful, but I little thought they would ever apply to us, *ma cocotte.*"

As evening drew near, all the dwellers in St. Eloy, men, women, and children began to wend their way towards the church. They were all arrayed in their holiday garments—those who had any mourning being clad in black.

The bell was not tolled, for fear of arousing the

curiosity of neighbouring villagers; numbers of whom had been seen, first and foremost among the revolutionary crew who had set fire to de Vassy's château.

Within the church, before the altar, was placed the poor priest's coffin: a coffin which the village carpenter had toiled all day to make. Over it was spread the pall, sprinkled with silver "*tears*," and quartered by a large white cross; around, tapers were burning. The four choristers were dressed in their surplices, and when the body was slowly carried forth, they sang their accustomed funeral office.

There was no cross to carry before the corpse; but it was followed by the whole of the curé's people; their silence only being broken by a sob heard from time to time.

The burying-ground was in the valley, a quarter of a mile from the village. This was slowly reached; the setting sun shedding nearly horizontal beams on the procession, and tinging the white cross on the pall with a reddish hue. The air was full of the sweet scent of violets; the distant cattle were lowing in the meads; the heavens were without a cloud.

The procession reached the white walls, thatched with straw, which stretched round the burying-ground, and passed through the open gates. The

body was lowered into the grave; one by one, each of the curé's parishioners drew near, took a farewell look, and cast a flower on the slight deal coffin that contained his mortal spoil. At that very hour on the evening before, the man who lay there, dead and cold, had sat beside de Vassy in the wood; little dreaming that his last day had passed: that his last hour was so near at hand.

The grave was filled up, a cross planted at the head; and then, with heavy hearts, the mourners returned to their several abodes.

Supper on that evening was far different at the veuve Langlois' from the supper that preceded it. Antoine and his father came in without a bidding; the old man and woman doing all in their power to console their children; whilst Nanette tried to stop her tears, and Antoine, leaning his cheek on his hand, fixed his eyes on his beloved, and let fall sundry remarks and denunciations which had nothing of the odour of "patriotism" about them.

"How are we to be married?" he enquired, looking fiercely around him, and grinding his teeth. "The priests who used to serve the villages round about are all guillotined or in prison. What is to be done? May the republic '*une et indivisible*' go to the devil, and never come back again!" There followed

a silence; then renewed efforts at consolation on the part of the old people; Antoine tearing his hair and uttering stifled oaths; Nanette hiding her face in her hands.

At last a bright idea presented itself to Maître Charpentier.

"My dear Antoine," he said, "that which is deferred is not lost: I feel that your happiness is deferred; therefore it is not lost. *C'est logique au moins!* Now look here. Get you gone to Rouen; enquire as to marriages; see if you can't be married there. I could swear that before this day month Nanette will be yours. Ah! what do you think of that for an idea? Eh? Mme. Langlois, what do *you* think of it?"

The schoolmaster's idea was received with great applause. Antoine felt that all difficulties had vanished like a morning mist. He drew his chair briskly to the table, filled up the glasses with cider, and insisted that every one should *trinquer* with him, and each other; then cutting large wedges of bread for himself and his friends, he began to sup in right earnest, declaring that misery had withheld him from food since the evening before.

Nanette tried with all her heart to put entire faith in the sacristan's words: however, in spite of herself

misgivings would creep in and sadden her spirit; though Antoine looked on her with merry eyes and laughed, as he had laughed when happiness seemed so certain that no one dreamt of its fading away before such black misfortunes.

When Nanette was alone in her room, she saw the presents she had ranged on her oak chest the night before. She took them off, and lifting the lid of the chest, she looked on her bridal costume, lying among dried rose-leaves and lavender. Her sigh was half a sob as she fixed her eyes on it. She drew forth the silver-embroidered cap; a tear crept down her cheek as she sadly viewed it, and remembered the thoughts of happiness the last time she had done so.

Love, even among the best natured people, is apt to be a selfish passion. Without reflecting on this, Nanette, still holding her head-dress, began to reprove herself, and to think that whilst so many other unfortunate beings were bearing patiently sorrows that would find no healing in this world, she was giving too much grief to her own misfortune; which, after all, was not without a remedy: at least, according to Maître Charpentier's ideas on the subject.

She bethought her of the seigneur's calm look of resigned dignity when he had lost everything of mundane value; when he was insulted and scoffed

at by the dregs of the people; when death was even then, as it were, about to seize him. She remembered, too, the still, gentle air of the curé's face, the moon shining upon it as it was borne high above his murderers: and seeming to look down forgivingly upon them, though stained by blood of their spilling.

Nanette put by her cap.

"Ah!" she said to herself, "I feel ten years older than I did last night. I am very unhappy: but courage! I will always remember and firmly believe poor M. le curé's words, that for *good* people everything is for the best; if not in life, at least after death."

The following day Antoine, with a heart full of hope, set out on his way to Rouen; twelve miles distant from his native village.

The beautiful freshness of morning added to the joy of his feelings, as he stepped quickly along; young, strong, and firmly believing that he already saw the end of his troubles. Being of a light, volatile nature, encouraged and equally discouraged by a trifle, his present hopes quite sufficed to banish from his mind, for the moment, all the events of the night and of the day which had brought such grief to St. Eloy.

"Those rascals," he thought, "have done their

worst by the seigneur's property, but the farm he gave as Nanette's marriage portion is her own. On that we can live as happily as princes, without meddling with state affairs; and, no doubt, things will soon come round: people can't go on like madmen very long without coming to a check."

It was very well for young Charpentier to build castles in the air about living on Nanette's portion: he little dreamt that the farm, as well as all the rest of the Marquis's estates, were at that moment government property, and that they would before long be sold to the highest bidder.

He, moreover, was not aware that the republicans, in their way from the château to the village, had burst into the farm-house, where they had soon made an end of that part of the wedding-feast which had been spread out in readiness for the morrow. The windows were broken, the orchard grass bruised and trampled down; all things about the little property, left with a sad and desolate air.

Potier's mill had not escaped. The "patriots" broke the wheel, and carried off all the flour *pro bono publico.*

Antoine stopped to breakfast at a little inn by the road-side, announced to be such by the inscription "*Ici on loge à pied et à cheval,*" as well as by a paint-

ing on the wall representing a black bottle standing firm and erect, a glass at a respectable distance, and in the same position as the bottle, the two connected by a red stream of wine which flowed in an arch from the neck of the bottle into the glass, this latter appearing to be half filled from the former.

Antoine sat himself down at a permanent table beneath the apple-trees, drew forth a huge piece of bread, two hard eggs, and a large clasp-knife, called for a pitcher of cider, and began his repast with a great appetite.

The landlord of the inn was a fiery young man, somewhat older than Charpentier. He wore no coat, his shirt sleeves were turned up above his elbows, a red cap topped his head; he was in a ferment of republican ardour, and he called himself *le citoyen Régulus.*

Régulus drawing near to his customer took a seat on the end of the table, one foot on the grass the other kicking to and fro; he crossed his arms, looked at Antoine over his shoulder, swore an oath with a burst and a rattle; then cried, opening his eyes like a maniac, "*ça marche!*"

The countryman, waxing cautious at sight of Régulus's costume, answered, "Oh! decidedly," without being in the least aware of what was meant

by the landlord. He thought that the overboiling being perched on the table was very like the figures he had seen the night before; and that it would, therefore, be perhaps as well to agree with him.

Régulus, through this agreement with his sentiments, felt sure that his guest was on *the right side;* a term by which men designate the side which tallies with their own interests, passions, and opinions. Feeling sure of this, the flaming "citizen" launched out in praise of the powers then existing, of the state of France, and of the future, "red with blood and bright with glory," as he was pleased to express himself.

He next proceeded to laud the new regulations and laws, the doing away with religion, the making marriage merely a civil contract which a man might break at pleasure. "In the days of the tyrant, *calotins* made marriage a base slavery," he cried, "now the nation have given the people a wife and noble freedom. Yes! young man; we may now take a wife one day, and put her away the next, if we choose. We may have a fresh wife every week: it only remains that citizens should be allowed to take as many as they shall see fit, at one and the same time. Everything is open to everybody! I, Régulus, may before long become a repre-

sentative of the people; and then—*nous verrons!* Here's to your health!"

With these words the citizen Régulus drained Antoine's pitcher of cider to the bottom, then set off to draw another; for both of which he made free to see that his customer paid.

Antoine began to bristle up at such conduct.

"*Tais toi,*" cried Régulus; "liberty, equality, fraternity—*ou la mort.* It is only aristocrats and federalists, who refuse to share with a brother citizen. I always denounce such wretches."

Antoine deemed it better to lose a few extra sous than to lose his life: life, in those days, being often cut short for such-like trifling reasons; he therefore laughed, paid Régulus for the cider, and took his departure. To the "*salut et fraternité,*" with which the landlord addressed him at parting, he returned the same words, although he had never heard the Jacobin salutation before.

Young Charpentier would very willingly have returned to St. Elòy at once, with the news of marriage by civil contract only, but he thought it better to speed away to Rouen for more particulars on the subject; feeling that talking with Régulus, who could have told him everything, was something like striking a light in a powder magazine,

which might or might not blow up as the case might be.

To Rouen then he sped. How different it was from the peaceful, cheerful, industrious Rouen he had visited two or three times before in the course of his life!

People seemed to have nothing to do but to roar, sing, and rush about the streets. Dirt, brutality, and ferocity being the fashion of the day, every one did his best to look dirty, brutal, and ferocious; connecting those qualities with liberty, equality, and fraternity.

French gaiety had passed away: smiling faces and happy looks were not to be seen. Scowling superciliousness and savage determination were the popular expressions of countenance; beneath which a lurking fear of what the next minute might bring forth, was visible on many a bravadoing visage: to those, at least, who looked beyond the surface.

The cathedral and the other churches were shut up; the splendid stained windows, so rich and mellow, of some among them, were smashed into thousands of pieces; whilst several of those gray, venerable buildings were being converted into public offices.

Prints of Robespierre's ignoble head, as well as

those of other revolutionary worthies, were hung up in the print-shops ; the theatres and cafés were open, and the guillotine was *en permanence.* There was no lack of amusement.

Antoine, on arriving at the town, strolled about with a view to picking up information ; until, tired out, he was glad to sit down at a long table before a small inn on the least frequented Boulevard, and there call for food and drink. To wile away the time till he was served, he crossed his arms on the table, and placing his head upon them, he alternately dozed and reflected on all he had seen and heard.

He had learned everything concerning marriage by civil contract, and he burnt with impatience to lay his knowledge before Nanette.

As he thus dozed and thought, two men placed themselves one on each side of the table at which he sat. From the sound of their voices, and from their discourse, he guessed them to be republicans of the first water : as in fact they were. He soon learnt from their conversation that they had been among the mob who had burnt de Vassy's château on the night before : they talked over all the particulars of their outrages with the pleasure of sportsmen going over their hunting achievements.

Antoine discovered that the mob had consisted of

"good patriots" of Rouen, put on the scent of the château, and assisted in the destruction thereof, by villagers in the neighbourhood of St. Eloy. He further discovered that the whole property would be sold forthwith by government, for the good of the people: at least so it was set forth.

This news rather damped young Charpentier's spirit; and he raised his head with a sigh, as his soup was placed before him. He looked quickly at the two speakers he had been listening to, but he did not remember to have seen them before; so he dipped his spoon in the soup, proceeding with his dinner without looking on them.

As he was tearing his ragged *bouilli* to pieces—*bouilli* that had been boiled and served up more than once—his eyes rested on a passing traveller mounted on a strong, round-built horse.

Antoine threw down his knife and fork, vaulted over the narrow table, cried out loudly, "Arsène!" and ran to overtake the horseman.

Arsène Potier, thus stopped, opened his blue eyes to their full extent; whilst even his forehead was suffused and crimson.

"*Et Ma'mselle Nanette?*" was all he could say; and *that* he said before he was aware of what he was about.

Antoine shook his head, and in a low voice told him all that had occurred since they had parted.

Arsène sat petrified with horror.

"And your marriage?" he said, at length.

"Ah!" replied Antoine, laughing, "that will be settled before this day week, I take it."

"By civil contract?"

"There's no other way of doing it now."

"Do you suppose *she* would consent to that sort of marriage?" enquired Arsène.

"To be sure she would. She loves me, and that is everything. Besides, civil contracts are lawful, and what more would any *fillette* require?

Arsène made no answer to this. He wished his friend and rival good-bye, and trotted towards home; his heart full of astonishment and sorrow: and yet with an undefined sentiment of hope that Nanette's marriage with Antoine might be yet further put off.

"And what if it is?" he asked himself; "she will never love me. I am an unworthy friend to dream of such a thing."

Antoine's sleep at the inn he had dined at was much disturbed by a kind of political club, of the lowest, most violent, and consequently most noisy kind, which met in the room beneath him.

It wanted only an hour of dawn when, at length,

hot, angry, and weary, he fell into so a heavy a sleep, that none of the noisy sounds and voices about the house were able to awaken him till late in the morning. Then jumping up, he paid his reckoning, and started off for his village, brisk and alert as on the preceding day; yet with a misgiving at heart, to which he would not listen.

As he stepped along through the town he passed the *place* on which the guillotine played its part.

There it stood, painted of a dingy red; the triangular knife shining in the gay morning-sun. Round about it strolled a crowd of amateurs in cruelty; speculating on what would be offered for their entertainment that day.

Antoine had never before seen the guillotine.

He stopped and looked at it; but he felt his flesh creep at the sight, and he passed on.

As he left the *place* and walked up the street through which his road lay, he beheld a crowd filling up the whole width of it; a crowd running, and undulating like the sea, from the midst of which a confused sound of voices smote his ear.

It came on, and Antoine, to avoid being carried back by it, stepped into a doorway. Presently in the midst of the multitude he saw a long cart drawn by two horses, the driver sitting in front, and six

persons ranged behind him. The cart was escorted by *gens-d'armes*, and proceeded at a quick pace. Antoine felt his heart beat as it drew near with its load of victims; for victims he knew that they were.

Before the cart reached him he strained his eyes to catch a sight of the prisoners. There was a young officer in a very old and tattered uniform of the "*royal-allemand:*" he looked gay and full of derision. Beside him sat a feeble old woman. Antoine started; it was one of the dwellers in St. Eloy, who with trembling voice had cried—"*vive le roi!*" when called upon to cry "*vive la république,*" by the mob.

The cart contained likewise a square-shouldered Norman, an old acquaintance of Antoine's, about to suffer for the same crime as the old woman.

These two sat silent, and to all appearance stultified. Between them was a nun, her face hidden in her hands; she dreaded to behold the guillotine, though she did not fear to die.

An old man sat mumbling to himself, with palsied head; and then came the Marquis de Vassy.

Antoine knew him, in spite of his hair closely cropped for execution. His face was pale; his eyes were marked by a dark circle, and burning with unearthly gleam. He looked neither to the right nor to the left; his gaze was fixed on the *couperet* shin-

ing in the distance, whilst a half-smile was on his lips.

His black velvet dress was dusty and disordered; his shirt frill scarlet with the curé's blood.

The crowd was too intent on its own diversion to notice Antoine; they ran beside the cart taunting the prisoners, without perceiving, luckily for him, how he trembled and changed colour, on seeing his seigneur and his two fellow villagers.

The cart rattled on; the victims became more and more indistinct to Antoine's sight as they drew near the *place;* the street became empty, and he was left alone.

He felt sick and faint, and unable to pursue his journey, till, at the first café, he took a potion to restore him to himself.

Antoine left Rouen, his spirits divided between grief for the sight he had just seen, and joy at the idea of the civil contract. The nearer he drew to St. Eloy, the more joy overpowered grief: when he arrived at his father's house, his eyes were sparkling with happiness; grief was for a time quite forgotten.

Nanette was spinning; thinking sadly over the horrors she had seen, and wishing for Antoine's return; when, from the open door at which she sat, she beheld him at the orchard gate.

"Good news, Nanette!" he cried as she ran out to meet him. "There is no difficulty about our wedding! The republic has made it all as easy as A.B.C. We may be married as soon as we please; this very day, if you will only walk over to the village of Saen, where all the new laws are in full force."

Nanette looked pleased and puzzled on hearing these words.

"Tell me more about it, Antoine; for I don't quite understand. Is there a new priest at Saen?"

In answer to this question of Nanette's her lover replied:

"Priest? No, Nanette; there is no such thing as priest now; except herds of them on board the galleys."

"Oh! Antoine, Antoine, how horrible! How are we to be married then?"

Antoine put his arm gently round Nanette's waist, and said in a half-whisper:

"Why, dear little Nanette, by—by—civil contract. There!"

"By civil contract? How is that?"

Antoine explained, and told Nanette all he had heard at Rouen: keeping back, however, that part of the new law of marriage, whereby a man might so easily get rid of his wife.

He changed colour when, having finished his discourse, he beheld Nanette cast down her eyes, and play with the string of her apron, instead of receiving his words with joy and answering them with alacrity.

"What are you thinking of, Nanette, eh? Why don't you speak? I thought you would have been so pleased. What is the matter? *Do* say something. *Allons!*"

Without looking up, Nanette said in a low voice:

"Do you think that kind of marriage *could* be happy, Antoine?"

"Yes—why not?"

"Because there would be no religion in it; and it would not be blessed by the church."

Antoine kept silence awhile, with his eyes fixed on Nanette. He felt as she did; but he told himself that if he gave way to her, there would be no chance of marriage for many a long day.

Nanette began slowly to turn her wheel.

"Look here, Nanette," said Antoine somewhat impatiently; "law is law, and marriage is marriage, whether celebrated at church or before the civil authorities."

"That depends, Antoine."

"How do you mean 'that depends'? All that is necessary is a law to arrange that, after some settled

ceremony, two persons shall be husband and wife; and all *that* the civil contract provides for."

Antoine said this in the very words in which a patriotic citizen had enlightened him on the subject; but to his speech Nanette only rejoined by a deep sigh.

"Well, Nanette, why don't you speak?" enquired her lover; dropping on both his knees beside her, and looking up into her face. She left off turning her wheel, and then said softly, but firmly:

"I am sure, Antoine, that if we marry in this heathenish way, all sorts of misfortunes will come upon us; and our marriage will be miserable."

"Then do you mean not to marry me while this law is in force, Nanette?"

As he uttered these words, Antoine jumped up from his knees; knitting his black eyebrows, his eyes flashing fire.

"Yes, Antoine—I cannot go against my conscience. It is better to be unhappy than to be wicked; and if I married without a religious ceremony I should feel like a heathen."

"This is foolish superstition, Nanette. You will *never* marry me; and your love cannot be very strong if it does not enable you to get over a trifle like that."

"Oh! Antoine:" cried Nanette in a voice full of grief, as her tears began to fall.

"Women always cry by way of proving their love; but tears go for nothing, Nanette: I want deeds. I shall never believe in your love till you marry me: never.—I daresay now that Javotte, or Marie, besides many more, would not refuse me as you do, for very nonsense."

Nanette heard these words, but could make no answer to them, so oppressed was she by sorrow.

Antoine hovered about her, sometimes trying tenderness; and then railing and blustering, in the vain hope of frightening her into marrying him, lest she should lose him by her resistance.

Nothing availed, however: neither tenderness nor fury.

Nanette was not to be moved from her ideas of religion and duty; she would sooner have gone to the scaffold than have done anything which she deemed would spot her pure soul. The civil contract she viewed with horror and dread.

She struggled to speak, as Antoine was about to dart from the house swearing that she loved him no longer, that he would never see her again, and that he would marry Javotte, who was above silly prejudices.

"Antoine," cried poor Nanette, "I *do* love you. —Listen, before you go"—and here her tears interrupted her.

"Well, speak.—Is it yes or no?"

"It is not that. Antoine, did not your father tell us that an army was about to appear in France with our princes; and that then every thing will be restored to order?—Then, dear Antoine, we can be married without any sin; our lives will be happy, and our consciences at ease."

"Oh! yes; and suppose the princes and their army are beaten, what then?—Adieu, Nanette—for ever!"

Antoine, boiling over with passion, anger, and disappointment, dashed from the house; nearly oversetting la veuve Langlois, who was returning with a pailful of rich milk from her cows in the meadow.

"My dear Antoine, what is the matter with you?" she cried, trying to stop him.

"Ask Nanette," was the answer; and Antoine was gone.

Mme. Langlois, on learning what had taken place, ranged herself on Nanette's side, with fond praises on her conduct.

"Besides, *cocotte*, I met Arsène, who has been telling me about this civil contract: it allows a man to

put away his wife and marry another whenever he chooses. Who knows what Antoine might take into his head some fine day?" said the widow.

"Oh! *ma mère*," returned Nanette, "I could trust to Antoine's honour, if that was all; but it is the contempt of religion which is shown by the civil contract, that frightens me."

"Ah! my Nanette, you know nothing of men. Antoine, with nought to bind him, would be just as faithless as his betters."

"No, never: I feel entire faith in Antoine. He is *very* angry just now, and I am very miserable: but he will come back before long; you will see. He has sworn that he loves me; and that he always *will* love me, and that is enough. He would *never* be faithless—never."

The widow smiled at her daughter's words, but said nothing.

It is a hard, a scarcely possible thing, to shake the love of some women, or their faith in their lover; however unworthy of such love and such faith the object of them may be.

They are like the shepherdess who sings:—

"On dit dans le village,
Bien du mal de mon amant,
Moi, je le trouve charmant!"

That last line is conclusive.

Nanette was right. As evening merged into night, Antoine, in a penitent frame of mind, crept into her home; seeming half doubtful how he should be received. Nanette adored him; and being one of those gentle women who have no bitterness of spirit, she met him as though nothing had happened to disturb their serenity. Not a word was said about the civil contract, on that evening of forgiveness.

For some time matters went on very smoothly between the two lovers; who seemed the fonder for their difference.

One morning, however, about two months later, Antoine arrived at the veuve Langlois', with news that Jean Dufour and Elise Leroux were about to be married by civil contract.

As he gave this information, he fixed his eyes on Nanette. She turned hers away, and said:

"No, Antoine, no! I understand what you mean; but my mind is made up!"

Antoine hit the palm of his left hand with his right hand clenched, and turned short on his heel, saying:

"*Tu ne m'aimes plus, c'est certain.*"

Of course the same scene was gone through as on the day the civil contract had first been proposed by

Antoine; of course he rushed forth like a maniac: and, of course, peace was very speedily restored.

The summer passed away; Nanette trusting in, and hoping for, the princes with the foreign army; Antoine looking forward to a relenting and change of mind on her part.

September arrived. It was then reported that the de Vassy estate had been bought by a very rich Parisian citizen; and so it was.

The buyer was a young man between twenty and thirty; son of a lawyer, originally from the south of France. Le sieur Daridolle, the father, had made a large fortune; his son was to spend it for the honour and glory of the family.

This young man, from his birth up to the time of the revolution, had been known as Jean François Daridolle; when the troubles were well established, he graced himself with the style and title of *le citoyen Mucius*. Daridolle, *alias* Mucius, was a thin little man, with slender legs; an olive complexion; turned up nose; large, vacant black eyes; wide mouth, and very little chin. He had somewhat the appearance of a sick kitten; but he gave himself the most ferocious air he was capable of, and uttered blasphemies with a sneer. He had thrown himself head over heels into Jacobinism; as well as into all the de-

praved dissipation necessary to form a "fine fellow" at that epoch.

When citizen Mucius arrived to take possession of his newly-purchased estate, he struck astonishment into the souls of the villagers of St. Eloy, both by his puny, sickly air, and by the fashion of his costume. He wore a short bright green cloth frock-coat with side-pockets. The lapels of this garment measured nearly three feet from point to point; sticking out beyond Mucius's thin little arms. His waistcoat was white and flowered; turned back like the coat, though with smaller lapels. Beneath this waistcoat was another of glaring colours. A large gold brooch, in shape like a crescent and in size like a five-franc piece, decked the breast of his shirt. The citizen's black hair was very long and wild;

"Floating free as mountain breezes."

It hung down to his shoulders, hiding a great part of his visage, the lower part of which was eclipsed by an immense cravat with a large bow; which cravat was pulled up to Mucius's nether lip. The collar of his coat mounted to his ears, and then fell over again to his shoulders; so that what with hair, neckcloth, collar, and a cocked hat decked with a tricoloured cockade, and perched over his nose, very little was

to be seen of his countenance, except his huge unholy eyes, vacantly staring. Even one of these was hidden from time to time by a caricature-looking *quizzing-glass*, through which Mucius attempted to stare people down. On his spare legs appeared a pair of primrose breeches, and speckled silk stockings; a large knot of ribands hung from each knee half-way down the leg. Buckles had disappeared from both feet and knees; wherefore Daridolle's long quartered and very pointed shoes were fastened by strings. He wore his coat-cuffs turned up; and carried a very short, thick stick, covered with knotty roughnesses: a species of bludgeon.

This was the costume brought in by the "patriots," to supersede the courtly, aristocratic dress of the "*ci-devants*."

The garments of the present time are legitimate descendants of those of the republic; made different to them by years and modification, but still bearing a strong family likeness to their ancestors.

In 1793, dishevelled elf-locks had taken the place of powder and bags; cloth, the place of velvet, silk, satin, and embroidery; bludgeons had superseded swords; and rough manners had dethroned courtesy.

The stout Norman countrymen stood and stared at citizen Mucius, as they would at a monkey, whenever

he made himself visible ; he, the while, imagining that they were lost in mute admiration.

He took up his abode at the farm given by de Vassy as Nanette's "*dot ;*" whilst a new mansion of classical design was being built on the foundations of the old château : *that* had grown up slowly, stone by stone, in the days of Francis the First.

Comparisons were made by the villagers between their departed seigneur and Mucius, very much to the citizen's disadvantage ; who was usually called by them "*ce petit trognon.*"

Mucius quite set up for a republican Apollo, and a man of gallantry, in a rough, ferocious, peremptory kind of manner. He was fully persuaded that he should be worshipped by all the young Norman beauties ; and that he had only to appear in order to be adored. Accordingly, he had no sooner arrived at St. Eloy than he stept about the village, staring at all the women through his glass ; a glass which was neither concave nor convex, but as flat as that of a window : the citizen's sight being perfectly good.

He returned from his stroll, having noted in his mind which among the women he had inspected, were young and pretty enough to be honoured by his admiration and attention.

As he drew near to his own home, he met Nanette

coming up the hill, laden with a basket of various household stores from a neighbouring village.

Citizen Mucius pulled his cravat well up to his mouth, which caused him to look like an ape playing the pan-pipes; he then applied his window to his eye, squaring his elbow; whilst with the other hand he executed a *moulinet* with his bludgeon.

As Nanette drew near, Mucius stood still, staring at her with the most pompous air imaginable.

"*Bon soir, citoyenne:*" he cried, stepping before her, for the purpose of stopping her.

"*Bon soir, monsieur,*" returned Nanette, coldly, as she tried to pass the pigmy republican.

"Oh! oh! you're a little aristocrat, are you? You must call me *citoyen;* though one day you will call me Mucius, for you're very pretty."

With these words little Daridolle seized Nanette by the arm. She felt her heart beat with dread and indignation.

"You are mad," she cried; "let me go, monsieur."

"*Citoyen,* if you please. I shall soon teach you more patriotic manners, *ma gentille.*"

"Let me go, Monsieur Daridolle; let me go directly," cried poor Nanette, beginning to tremble.

"*Allons donc!*" returned citizen Mucius, slipping his

arm around her waist. "You are much too pretty for a country-girl: you *are, foi de Jacobin!*"

Citizen Daridolle Mucius could not see behind him, or maybe he would have walked quietly on his way.

Coming down the hill in his rear was a gigantic figure, leading a gray horse laden with a sack of wheat.

"*Au secours,*" cried Nanette, "*au secours.*"

Mucius laughed, and held her tight.

The gigantic figure seemed to take but three bounds, to reach the spot where Daridolle *filait le parfait amour;* one strong hand seized the new proprietor by his vast collar, the other gripped the gallant citizen's skeleton thigh; in a second he found himself flying through the air, as though tossed by a bull, to descend on his back on the other side of the bank that bordered the road.

"Ah! Arsène," cried poor Nanette, clasping her hands, "how can I thank you enough?"

"*N'y a pas de quoi, Mam'selle Nanette,*" returned Arsène, picking up Mucius' cocked hat. "Here, little monster, come and fetch your hat!"

Daridolle, in great wrath, scrambled over the bank; his beautiful green coat covered with dust, and his enormous eye-glass frame devoid of glass.

The citizen let off a round of oaths, which smelt of Paris mud, continuing:

"How dare you touch me with your great ugly paws, *misérable?* How dare you interfere with me, *scélérat?*"

"In the name of liberty and equality, to be sure," returned Arsène, laughing.

"Give me my hat, and learn to respect a pure patriot. My uncle, citizen Gracchus, is one of the Convention. I should only have to write to him, and your ugly head would roll in the dust."

"*Vas te coucher!* I'll see you safe home again, Mam'selle Nanette; though I don't think *le petit* would be disposed to be impertinent after what has just taken place."

"Ah! oh! you call the *citoyenne* '*mademoiselle*,' do you? You are a couple of aristocrats: my uncle Gracchus shall hear of you, and of your *citoyenne* too!"

Arsène coloured on hearing himself thus linked with Nanette; and Mucius, pulling up his disarranged cravat, departed in malicious wrath.

Nanette would not allow young Potier to guard her home; neither did he insist on so doing, well knowing that Jean François Daridolle was making the best of his way to his own house.

"What has happened, *cocotte?*" enquired the veuve Langlois, kissing her daughter, and frightened by

her hurry and trembling, as she darted into the cottage and put down the basket.

Nanette soon told her mother all that had taken place.

Mme. Langlois was equally vivacious in lauding Arsène, and in condemning citizen Mucius.

"Promise me, *ma mère*, that you will not say anything about this to Antoine; he would be so angry, I think he would be capable of killing Monsieur Daridolle."

"Eh! what are you saying there, Nanette? What should I be angry about; and what has that little viper been doing? I'll crush him like a snail, if he has done anything to offend you!"

Nanette turned round on hearing her lover's voice. He had come in softly to surprise her, and had overheard her last words. It was quite in vain for her to try and persuade him that it was all "nothing;" Antoine was not to be persuaded: he waxed irate, as was his custom when vexed; vowing that he would that instant sally forth and be revenged, with a mighty vengeance, on Mucius; as he was quite sure he must have very much annoyed Nanette, who would not be in such tremor for "nothing."

Seeing matters take this turn, the veuve Langlois, in hopes of preventing mischief, told Antoine of the

citizen Daridolle's impertinence, and of Arsène's castigation of him.

"You see, Antoine," she said in conclusion, "that your friend has punished him, so there is no further need of touching him, after his fly over the bank."

"Arsène is an honest fellow; I must go and thank him, and hear what he thinks about all this. *Au revoir*, Nanette; good evening, Mme. Langlois."

Poor Nanette felt uneasy at heart, and slept badly that night: the idea of "my uncle Gracchus" of the Convention kept her waking. She felt so fearful that Daridolle would bring some misfortune on Arsène for the manner in which the young miller had spoiled his wooing; and so alarmed lest Antoine, with his fiery temper, should further provoke the little citizen; that her heart beat quick, and her hands trembled, at the ideas she called up in the stillness of night.

Morning, and the sight of Antoine calm and composed, were great soothers to her spirit.

The village was up in arms on hearing of Daridolle's conduct towards Nanette; who was, they said, "*si bonne et si sage.*" The anger of the villagers was not lessened by the recollection of his stroll through their hamlet, staring impudently through his glass at all the women he met.

The men resolved to keep their eye on him, and to treat him as circumstances might require. Their wives and daughters ran away the moment they caught sight of his lapels and cocked hat.

Citizen Mucius was not so successful with the fair sex of St. Eloy as he might have been; however, he contrived to make himself so obnoxious, that the brothers and lovers of the offended beauties declared the hour of punishment to have arrived.

A body of these young men proceeded to Daridolle's abode: all of them save Antoine hid themselves in a shrubbery hard by, whilst he stood sentry, to watch for their victim, and to catch him as he issued forth on his afternoon promenade.

The republican did not keep his enemies long in waiting.

As he stept out, bludgeon in hand, Antoine collared him, shook his fist in his face, and gave a loud whistle.

"*Au meurtre! au feu! aux voleurs!*" shrieked Mucius, struggling to get free from Antoine's grip.

The band of tormentors ran forward from their ambuscade; an immense blanket, brought with them, was quickly unfolded, and citizen Daridolle Mucius was pitched head foremost into it.

"One, two, three!" cried the eight men who held

the blanket; and the next minute the shrieking republican was high in the air, above the tops of the orchard trees.

Down he came into the blanket, up he flew again, over and over again, amidst shouts of laughter from the young men. Up and down he went; hair, coat-tails, and lapels fluttering in the wind. His piercing cries were by degrees reduced to strangled gaspings; at which symptoms it was thought prudent to let him go.

No sooner was he free, than he staggered into his house; anon appearing at one of the top windows.

He was greeted by uproarious laughter.

Daridolle, in voice and action, was very like an insane Punchinello as he screamed and jumped about at the window.

"*Ah! chiens de royalistes!* is this the way you lay hands on the nephew of a member of the Convention? Is this the way you insult and show your contempt for the republic *une et indivisible?* If it had not been for my activity and my speedy retreat, you would have murdered me!—I see you all; I know you all! Tremble! I have you all in my power: I will be revenged for this day's insult.—Yes, tremble, vile wretches! I will write to my uncle Gracchus at the Convention!"

A burst of laughter greeted this speech.

"*Fais lui nos complimens à ton oncle,*" was the answer to it. The tormentors took their leave; advising their victim to take care how he made love in their village again.

Revenge is commonly supposed to be sweet. Antoine and his allies enjoyed the sweets of theirs for awhile; the history of Mucius tossed in a blanket, being a subject of never ending delight and hilarity.

From the day on which he soared so high he was never seen in the village; and shortly after he took his departure for Paris.

There was a continued gloom hanging over St. Eloy. The inhabitants still dwelt on the remembrance of the night of horror that had brought such a change upon them. The church remained shut; there was no worship, and no Sunday; the *décade* having taken the place of the seventh-day. There was mourning for the friends and kinsmen who had died by the guillotine; as well as for the seigneur and the curé. The priest's grave was the care of the whole community; and, although the citizen Mucius had seen to the tearing up all the crosses at the grave heads, the spot where the meek curé reposed was carefully tended, and many a wreath of *immortelles* placed upon it by those he had loved and left.

Winter came on, with its frosts and snows and blustering winds; its dashing rain; its chilling sleet; its short bright sunshine; and its long comfortable nights; comfortable, at least, for those who have thick walls and good fires, besides cozy beds wherein to lie, warm and secure, listening to the tempest without, till sleep steals over the quiet senses to the sound of the raging storm.

May our hearts melt with pity for, and our hands open to succour, those who are poor, hungry, cold, and desolate!

The winter evenings passed pleasantly at the veuve Langlois'. Maître Charpentier and his son came in, after the work of the day, to sit with their neighbours; the widow knit; Nanette span; Antoine sat beside her; whilst the schoolmaster read the newspaper to them, and such books as he had. Besides this, they chatted together, regretting past times; mourning over the present; and hoping better things for the future.

The cat and the puppy enjoyed the fire, lying side by side; enduring a degree of heat which none but dogs and cats can stand.

On Sunday evenings the old sacristan would read to them, in low tones, from "*L'imitation*," a French translation of Thomas à Kempis, given by M. le curé

to Nanette, after her first communion; and prized by her above all her treasures. Other devout books too he read to them; but on that day they did not dare to dress in their best, or rest from labour: such conduct might have put their heads beneath the greedy triangular knife.

Towards the end of December, the citizen Mucius reappeared at St. Eloy, and there was an air of triumph about the puny iniquity, which boded no good.

Nanette's dormant fears concerning uncle Gracchus returned in full force, and held their place in spite of all Antoine's efforts to hunt them away.

One cold frosty evening as she was driving the two cows home to their shed, Tonton barking at their heels, Nanette's heart fell on beholding a small body of soldiers, in the blue uniform of the republic, enter the village.

She had learnt all about the "*réquisition*," from Maître Charpentier's evening readings; and she felt and knew that the soldiers were come to collect *volunteers*: as men were called who, if they had refused to enrol themselves, would have done so at the peril of their lives.

The soldiers came to a halt, and were in due time billeted on divers of the inhabitants of St Eloy.

The officer fell to Maître Charpentier's lot.

On that evening there was no pleasant reading by the fire. Antoine stole away from his father's to tell Nanette that what she had heard was about to take place: the soldiers had come for volunteers. He told her that the officer's words were; that the nation invited all good citizens to rush to the frontier, there to cover themselves with glory, and "*to deserve well of their country.*"

All single men capable of bearing arms were to turn out at the voice of "*la patrie :*" there was no remedy, go they *must :* go and serve as *volunteers.*

Nanette sat listening to Antoine's words, without moving or speaking; she could hardly believe that she was awake: she felt as though she was in a dream caused by fever, and that she should presently wake and find it to be such.

There was no such happiness for Nanette: Antoine was present to her in person, and his deep voice was really sounding in her ears. She could not weep, she was too much stunned for tears; she could not speak, she was too much shaken to find words.

There was a long and gloomy silence, only broken from time to time by an exclamation from the widow, who wrung her plump hands and cast up her eyes in despair.

Antoine arose to depart as the church clock struck twelve. He kissed Nanette's forehead, and then her tears began to fall.

"Nanette, it is not too late to save me. We have only to appear before the authorities of Saen. We can start at dawn; we should return in a couple of hours as man and wife."

These words of Antoine's smote Nanette to the heart. She could only say:

"Good night, Antoine! Leave me now: I will think about it."

Poor Nanette did think about it, and combat with herself throughout the livelong night.

On one side she beheld her lover marched off, perhaps to be sent to the frontier, and maybe there to lose his life.

"How unhappy, how miserable I should be," she thought. "Yet under all this wretchedness I should not have committed sin: my conscience would be clear; my heart would commend me even in the midst of its pain and grief."

On the other side, she beheld Antoine as her husband; and her once sanguine, but now drooping hopes thus turned to reality.

"That *would* be happiness, and Antoine would be so pleased. His life would not be put in danger, he

would live peacefully and far from battles, wounds, and death ; but then what would my conscience say? In the midst of joy my heart would tell me that we had attempted to secure our happiness by a sin : for I feel and know, that marriage entered into according to the law of wicked revolutionists who mock at religion and despise the blessings of the church, is no marriage at all. If I married my dear Antoine in this manner, I should fear that the curse of Heaven would overtake us, and blight us for our sins of contempt and disobedience. I am sure M. le curé would have said so, if those violent and wicked men had not murdered him."

At early dawn Nanette was up and dressed.

A light, low tap sounded at the cottage door ; her heart fluttered as she opened it, well knowing that Antoine was there.

" Well, Nanette !" he said quickly.

Nanette could not speak, but she shook her head ; gently pushed his shoulder, and made signs for him to depart.

" Ah ! I see how it is, Nanette ; it is quite plain that you do not love me as you did."

Antoine uttered these words in a loud, angry voice, as he was about to dart wrathfully away ; but when he felt Nanette gently take his hand, and saw the ex-

pression of her eyes, full of love and grief, his hard heart smote him, and shame spread a fiery blush over his face.

The day passed like a moment, as the day before a dreaded departure always will.

The *réquisition* was made; and all the stalwart bachelors—Antoine and Arsène included—were enrolled as volunteers.

Nanette's little savings went in the purchase of gifts which she thought would be of use to her lover in his military life. There were a pretty pipe, and a white kid-skin pouch filled with tobacco, besides a leather case to hold flints, *amadou*, and a steel to strike a light. To these she added a large clasp-knife with two blades; and an inkhorn: that he might not forget to write to her, she said, with a smile which had more of grief than joy about it.

There was a leather purse, too, among her presents, in which she made a secret pocket, wherein she deposited a very little gold crucifix, not above half an inch in length, which had been given to her by her godmother when Nanette was but five years old; and which Antoine remembered to have seen her wear on fêtes in the days of their childhood.

"Mind that you never lose that little cross, Antoine," she said. "It will be safe and secret in this

pocket; no one will see it, either to laugh at you or bring you into trouble for having it. Look at it sometimes, it will put good thoughts into your mind."

Arsène called in the evening to take leave of Nanette and her mother. The Charpentiers were there, and the young officer who was billeted on them.

Arsène felt separation from Nanette and his native village more than Antoine did; for he had not the consolation of being beloved by and betrothed to her. His honest heart ached at the thought of parting with his father and mother and Nanette; but he cherished a mournful hope that his life might be cut short in his first action.

The officer, who was young, egotistical, and who had no regrets, talked loudly and rapidly of himself, *his* ideas, *his* exploits, and *his* adventures; whilst he filled the little room to suffocation with the cloud that arose from *his* pipe.

Under cover of the noise and smoke, Arsène found an opportunity of saying to Nanette:

"I promise you that I will watch over Antoine like a brother. If I should be killed, you will think sometimes of poor Arsène, *n'est-ce pas, Ma'mselle Nanette?*"

"Yes, and pray for him too," was all Nanette could say, in reply to the friend of her childhood.

Nanette felt sick and weary, but she did not go to rest, lest weariness should prevail, and she should not be up to see Antoine depart.

The rain fell heavily during the night: as morning began faintly to dawn, Nanette started, and covered her ears with her hands on hearing the loud rattle of the drum from the village square.

The next time the drum beat, it would be to call the volunteers together for their march.

Antoine, his father, and the inevitable officer, now appeared at the cottage according to arrangement made the night before.

The cloth was already spread; and Nanette, with trembling hands, poured the smoking coffee and the hot milk into the bowls that stood before her mother and the guests. As for herself, she could neither eat nor drink; her throat swelled, though no tears fell.

"*Allons, la jolie fille!*" cried the young officer, who took his breakfast with much appetite and *gusto;* "do not discourage our amiable volunteer. He's a fine fellow; and things are not as they were in the days of the tyrant. Your *citoyen* will come back to you a general, covered with glory. My father was a shoemaker; but I hope one day to lead our armies

to victory: I have carried a musket and the *peau-de-veau*, and now I carry an officer's epaulettes; and in a few years that young man will do the same: he was born to be a soldier; *il ira loin*."

The drum sounded for the second time; stirring the whole village, and causing bitter tears to flow.

Antoine reddened, and arose suddenly as he heard the loud roll. Nanette turned deadly white; helped her mother to put on her thick cloak, and then put on her own.

The officer ran off alone, quick as lightning, as soon as the drum sounded.

Sad farewells were given and received; Nanette still feeling as though in a dream.

Poor old Maître Charpentier wept aloud, and hung on his son's neck.

As they all sallied forth beneath the dripping branches of the orchard trees, the rain had ceased; having given place to a thin cold mist.

The old people walked first; Antoine, holding Nanette's hand, came next, and these two walked in silence.

When they reached the square, it was already full of people. In the cottages around, candles were burning here and there; shedding a faint light

through the glimmer of a winter morning's twilight, and through the grey mist.

The soldiers were there, in their low cocked hats, long great-coats, and calf-skin knapsacks. There, too, were the young volunteers, speaking and hearing last words.

There was likewise present a little person in a very tall, pointed hat, with a tricoloured cockade, a wide velvet band, and a huge steel buckle. This being wore a thick carmagnole buttoned up to his chin ; and conversed in an important manner with the officer. The words, " my uncle Gracchus, of the Convention," figured largely in his discourse, which proves him to have been the citizen Mucius.

The last embraces were over. The volunteers had all fallen in, two deep, with a file of soldiers on either flank. Daridolle stepped up to the head of the little column.

" My brothers," he cried to the volunteers, " this is nearly as amusing as tossing a citizen in a blanket. I wrote about you all, as I promised, to my uncle Gracchus of the Convention, begging him not to forget you at the first *réquisition*. He has granted my request. I wish you a good journey ; and I engage myself to keep your images alive in the hearts of your *citoyennes*. *Salut et fraternité !*"

This speech of the malicious little republican caused a roar of anger from the volunteers, together with an attempt to break out; but the soldiers kept them steady. The officer thundered "*En avant, 'a-r-r-r-r-che!*" the drum beat; and the Norman peasants stepped out on their first march; disappearing through the mist, and being lost to sight long before the sharp rattle of the drum ceased to sound on the ear.

When they were gone, those who were left regained their homes; all more or less sorrowful and broken-hearted. The lights vanished one by one, as the cold daylight grew stronger. The villagers were forced to go to their daily labours, in spite of grief and sadness of spirit. There was no nursing and pampering of sorrow, in idleness and emptiness of mind; no pitying of themselves, or parading their misery before others: they bore their woe amidst poverty, toil, and weariness, trying to make the best of it; and leaving it, like an aching, undressed wound, to heal as best it might.

Nanette returned home with her mother and the poor old schoolmaster, who was now to be their especial care.

There is nothing more wretched than beholding vestiges of beloved beings who have just left us.

Such vestiges seem a part of them ; making them to appear yet present, though they are absent—gone !

Nanette stood awhile looking on the place where Antoine had sat ; everything was as he had left it : his chair standing on the spot to which he had pushed it, as he arose suddenly at the beat of the drum.

Maître Charpentier sat down weeping beside the fire ; the veuve Langlois began quickly to remove the remains of breakfast ; and Nanette, ashamed of giving way to grief, in what she considered to be a *selfish* manner, speedily helped her ; drank the cup of strong coffee which her mother, with a tender kiss, gave her ; and then tried, with the widow's help, to see how she could comfort the poor old sacristan's heart.

"Ah !" he said through his tears, "it's all very well for such as Monsieur Daridolle to talk about *the tyrant ;* but I don't see that tyrants in dirty carmagnoles, who call blood and murder liberty, are one bit better than tyrants in velvet and powder ; or that things are at all better than they were formerly. It is only a change of masters, and these are the worst ; for they rob us of life and children. Liberty is only a name." Saying this, the old man again began to mourn for his lost son.

The rain and mist gave place to a sickly sunshine.

When Nanette drove the cows to feed in the lane,

she passed the road along which the route of the soldiers and the volunteers had lain. There she saw the prints of their footsteps, many and deep, in the thick mud, wet and sparkling beneath the sun.

Nanette turned sharply away ; for she would not suffer her courage to be weakened, or her bitter grief to be increased, by aught that had power to do so.

"To the righteous everything will be for the best; if not in this life, at least in the life to come. I will never forget those words of poor M. le curé," she said to herself with a sigh ; trying to do her best to be patient, and to bear her sorrow with resignation.

How slowly that heavy day passed away ! But it did pass away, and Nanette reflected that she was one day nearer her next meeting with Antoine.

As night drew on, she walked with Maître Charpentier to his cottage ; lighted his fire, received his paternal kiss on the forehead, and left him to solitude and sorrow ; promising to go to him the first thing in the morning.

Poor Nanette, worn out and wearied, soon cried cried herself into a sound and heavy sleep ; dreamless, restoring : but from which the waking to real and present grief was bitter and chilling.

The rage into which citizen Mucius's speech had

thrown the volunteers, one and all, served for a while to drive their care away. After marching a mile or two, however, it returned in full vigour. Some of them kept a gloomy silence; others swore; whilst some of the poor country lads did not cry, they actually *blubbered.* The officer let their sorrow have its vent for a time; he then spoke as follows:

"*Allons! mes lapins;* it is time to banish all superfluous sensibility! You are about to become soldiers of the republic; you are to shed the blood of the satellites of the tyrant; cease then to shed tears! Forget all that you have left; look only to the glorious future. You will return generals; or you will die, and merit the proud distinction of having 'deserved well of the country.' You belong to the nation, you will soon wear her uniform. Cast grief away. *Vive la république, mort aux tyrans!*"

The Normans, who had no very republican instincts, and who were marching to glory without their own consent, did not feel much disposed to echo the officer's cry.

The soldiers did so, however; and the volunteers were informed that if they did not join in with a good will they would be looked upon as royalists or federalists, and plunged into prison with a view to guillotining. On receiving this information, embel-

lished with *sans-culotte* oaths, the new levy, thinking it as well to make the best of a bad job, got up the required cry, and set about trying to be merry and soldier-like; for their conductors, tired of their despondency, let fall hints that childish sorrow was unbecoming "*des braves*," and looked very like aristocrats' dislike to the service of the nation.

Arsène trudged along, composing his mind to bear his fate like a man; Antoine trudged along, determined to do all in his power to distract his thoughts and to forget sorrow. He lighted his pipe; joined in the patriotic songs of the soldiers; talked with them; and by the time they reached Rouen, had got so far as to laugh at their jokes; being assured by them that he would make a first-rate soldier, and find the road to glory.

At Rouen, some of the volunteers were left, to patch the holes of a line regiment that required mending.

Arsène and Antoine, with the remainder, were destined for Paris. The idea of Paris filled Antoine's mind with delight; he already felt himself to be a soldier, and pictured to himself the first visit to his native village, the joy of Nanette, and the sensation he should make among his old friends, male and female, with his moustache, his uniform, and his glory.

Arsène viewed him with astonishment. The impression of his village, and all he left there, was strong upon his mind; he was there in spirit, although his body was marching on towards Paris. Antoine's spirit was likewise in St. Eloy, but it was there in visionary pictures of the future, which displaced the images of the past and of the present.

As they journeyed on through mud and wet, a couple of heavy coaches, six post-horses to each, splashed past them. The blinds of these carriages were up, and the windows were guarded by iron bars.

"What are those?" asked Antoine of the soldier on his right.

"Baskets of poultry for the guillotine"—was the reply; to which Antoine forced a laugh; whilst Arsène looked after the coaches with a frown.

On arriving at Paris the volunteers were marched off to divers barracks.

The two friends were not separated. Great was their astonishment at the vast capital; and at the hundreds of *Daridolles* they saw walking about; as well as at women with waists beneath their armpits, and scanty garments which they raised up on one side, thereby exhibiting their leg to the knee: literally, not figuratively. These ladies held themselves very

upright, and stepped along boldly. They were supposed to look like classical statues ; and to be a good representation of the Sapphos, Aspasias, &c., &c., of Ancient Greece.

The more delicate among them descended to early graves, owing to scanty, cold costume ; but in the meanwhile they looked very classical, and felt very fashionable. What more could they desire ?

Our two Normans were destined to form part of a line regiment, in garrison at Paris.

Their drill began immediately, and uniforms were served out to them. The blue and yellow cloth which formed the coat and facings, was hard and coarse ; and the fit of the garment was not faultless, even after the regimental tailor had done his best ; however, Antoine, in his coarse coat, cocked hat, leather breeches, and black gaiters, felt himself to be perfect. The growth of his moustache was by him anxiously watched ; whilst he shaved the remainder of his beard close and smooth. When the thick, black, handsome moustache reached its full extent, the happy possessor tended it, twirled it, and viewed it in a glass, five inches by three, with the fondest admiration.

"Ah!" he said, "if Nanette could see me now?" His next letter was full of love and moustache.

Antoine very speedily gained the true military air, walked with a straight knee, looked careless, and rapped out an oath quite naturally. He felt that he really liked a soldier's life.

The first time that he was out with the battalion, was to him a glorious day. He rejoiced as he stept along, and listened with delight to the tapping and rattling of the large corps of drummers who marched at the head of the column, causing the windows of the houses to shake and rattle sympathetically; whilst the gigantic drum-major went through wonderful sleight of hand with his silver-topped stick; and all the little rats of *gamins* ran beside the regiment, uttering exclamations of admiration mingled with wit and impudence.

Arsène was in the same company with Antoine. He was soon fit for the battalion, and did his duty thoroughly; but he often sighed for his village, and his father's mill, his parents and the sight of Nanette. He was the largest, strongest and steadiest man in the company, but he never got the true military air: as his comrades were wont to say, he never looked "*crâne.*"

Arsène did not give himself to town pleasures; his delight was to stray out into the country about Paris, and to make acquaintance with the neigh-

bouring villagers. He would help them at their work, play with their children, and talk with the old people.

He was called among them, "*le beau citoyen militaire;*" and looked up to with admiration by the young girls: he, however, only noticing them as a friend.

Antoine, on the contrary, plunged into military life in Paris, went to dances, and to all the amusements, good and bad, of the times.

As he found that his country dancing was far different from town capers, he treated himself to a few lessons from the "*brave*" who made an honest penny by teaching his fellow-soldiers, and eke civilians, to perform entrechats, entrechats-double, &c., &c., &c.

It was a grand sight to see a line of three or four young fellows at battement distance, their arms extended, kicking up their legs in the performance of their *elements*, curtseying, jumping up wildly in entrechats, learning to bow, to invite a partner, and to conduct her back again. When more advanced, they executed Allemandes, and other dances together; the supposed ladies being distinguished by wearing their cocked hats.

Antoine quickly learnt various games of cards, by means of which he picked up small sums from soldiers

and civilians: small sums of great use in the pursuit of pleasure. In one of these games, the loser wore a split stick on his nose until he beat his adversary. Soldiers might often be seen before the guard-houses, sitting astride on each end of a bench, the middle part forming a table for the cards; one of the "*citoyens militaires*" wearing the stick: oft times with the serious, angry look of a losing gambler. The split stick very seldom rode on Antoine's nose.

Young Charpentier, moreover, gave lessons on the violin to "*pékins*," as the soldiers called the civilians; and thus enlarged his acquaintance, and added to his pleasure-money.

These pursuits, however, did not cause Antoine to neglect his military duties. He took great pride and delight in becoming a good soldier; he began to thirst for glory and an officer's epaulettes; so inflaming to his mind were the histories of the frontier and Vendean wars, told to him by those of his comrades who had borne a part in them.

Antoine remained faithful to Nanette, according to his ideas of fidelity: that is to say, he wrote to her; shewed her answers to his friends; and looked upon himself as her betrothed. Still he indulged in various little *affaires de cœur;* greatly to the scandal of faithful, honest, serious Arsène; who, possessing a mind

like that of a trusty, affectionate Newfoundland dog, could not imagine how his friend, the beloved of Nanette, could think so little of her as to lead the life he did.

Among Antoine's violin pupils, was a spruce young republican, calling himself *le citoyen Curtius*, but whose real name was Paul Michel, son of old Michel, the glove-maker; with whom Curtius lived, and in whose shop he served, when not engaged at political clubs and in political rows.

Young Michel received his lessons in his own room in the *entresol;* from which might be heard doleful squeakings, as of a babe in distress, accompanied by stampings of a military foot to mark the time, as well as a loud voice counting the same.

The glove-maker had lain his commands on Paul to keep his music-master within his own precincts, for this glove-maker had two very pretty daughters, and consequently did not wish for the intimacy of a smart and handsome soldier.

Paul obeyed his father's orders; but it so happened that Laure Michel was on the staircase one day, as Antoine was taking his departure after the lesson in company with his pupil. Perhaps Cupid may have been sitting on a fleecy cloud just above them, with an arrow about to fly from his bow; as he is repre-

sented in pastoral subjects, to indicate that the shepherd and shepherdess are on the point of being wounded by him. If Cupid on the cloud *was* there, he took a good aim, and smote the young soldier and Laure to the heart: at least it is to be supposed that he did so, as during the rest of the day they thought of nought but each other.

This being the case, it may readily be imagined that they found many opportunities of meeting. Paul, whose republican sentiments caused him to scoff at good feeling and parental reverence, favoured the lovers; taking his sister with him in his walks with Antoine.

Paul had another military friend who was wont to join them in these walks; a young trumpeter of hussars; a straightforward simple-minded young man, who sighed in vain for Laure. She encouraged him for her own amusement; but gave her heart to Antoine; in spite of the hussar's uniform, and the beautiful side-plaits of his hair; which, descending on each side of his smooth young face, were tied into his thick *queue*. The hussar was of a jealous nature; Laure was his first love; Antoine his first rival; and his feelings towards the infantry man were, consequently, anything but peaceable.

Renaud, the young hussar, was of a respectable family, well to do among the *bourgeoisie*. He, like

many others, was introduced to the army by the *réquisition;* but his dream was to marry and live quietly, following his father's trade in his native town.

Laure, in his imagination, possessed a thousand virtues, which she possessed nowhere else,—mere lover's chimeras!

She was, in fact, a very every-day lively coquette, with sufficient heart and beauty to turn the heads of young men, and lead them astray for awhile.

Renaud, nevertheless, thought her perfect; wrote on the subject of his love to his father; and, with his leave, then addressed himself to Laure's parents, with the offer of his hand, to be hers as soon as his period of service should be over.

Old Michel, who had no idea of his daughter's proceedings, waxed wrath on discovering the doings of the last three months; broke Paul's violin; ordered Antoine to depart without returning; locked up Laure; and, after due consideration and enquiries, accepted Renaud's offer. Laure, however, did not do so; she vowed that nothing on earth should induce her to marry Renaud, threatened to poison herself, and contrived to send tidings of all that had taken place to Antoine.

He, fierce and fiery, did not understand being defeated by a little hussar trumpeter.

He laid his plan; watched Renaud as he left Michel's house; to which he had repaired to pay his court to Laure, and from which he was retiring jealous and piqued; stept up to him, and laying his hand roughly on his arm, said: "*Trompette!* I desire that you will never visit that house again!"

Renaud shook off Antoine's hand, laughed in his face, and walked on without a word.

Antoine, foaming with rage, seized the hussar by the queue, crying as he did so:

"You are a coward, if you let that go by without satisfaction."

"The *pékins* are beginning to stare and collect," said Renaud; "let us walk on together as though we had been in play. We can arrange matters as we go."

Accordingly, as they went their way in seeming friendship, Renaud, overflowing with love and jealousy, gave the challenge; which Antoine, burning with rage, gladly accepted.

Such things were common enough in the French army of that day, both among officers and men; who lost their lives from slight causes blown into hot quarrels and bringing forth deadly duels.

It was settled as they walked, chafing, side by side, that they should collect their respective friends; that

Renaud should bring his cavalry pistols; and that they should meet in the burying ground nearest at hand.

It was necessary that all this should be quickly done; that the survivor, if there should be one, might, as well as his friends, return to barracks by tattoo; evening being near.

Antoine reached his quarters in haste. He could not find Arsène, who was out on one of his peaceful country strolls; but he collected three other of his comrades, and with them proceeded to the place appointed. He was too hurried and too wrathful to think coolly. The images of Nanette and of his father crossed his excited mind for an instant; then gave place to his rage, and to the business in hand.

The hussar with his three friends arrived a few minutes after the others. The pistols were then loaded, and it was agreed that the two soldiers were to be placed thirty paces apart; at a given signal they were to walk towards each other; he, on whom the lot should fall, was to fire first, and when he judged fitting; the other to return his fire, if able, as soon after as possible.

Lots were drawn; the first fire was Renaud's.

The rivals were placed in the broad road of the cemetery; the friends drew up on one side.

The signal was given by dropping a handkerchief, and the fatal march began.

It was already dusk, and objects were no longer distinctly seen; although Renaud and Charpentier were visible enough to each other to serve their purpose.

There was not a sound in the cemetery but that of the night-breeze sighing among funereal trees planted about the tombs.

The ceaseless hubbub of the town was there heard subdued, and sounding like the roar of a distant sea.

The two soldiers drew near to each other.

Renaud fired at about ten paces. The ball from his pistol grazed Antoine's shoulder-belt and whizzed on.

The hussar stood still, upright, firm; with arms crossed over his breast.

Antoine, with open nostrils and flashing eyes, took two paces forwards, and fired.

Renaud sprang from the ground with a loud gasp, and then fell heavily on his face.

His friends rushed to him.

"*Mort!*" they cried.

Antoine threw down his pistol; and with his three seconds made the best of his way to the barracks.

A strange sensation had crept over him on hearing the word "*mort!*" from the three hussars.

When he went out with Renaud, he had not realised the idea of killing him; so thoughtless, angry, and desperate was he.

He spoke of part of his feelings to his three comrades; they cheered him as well as they could, told him that after he had fought a few more duels, and seen as many as they had, he would think nothing of it; and that it would be a great triumph when he appeared before Laure, as one who had fought for her sake, and had thereby delivered her from the persecution of Renaud.

For many a day after the duel the word "*mort*" rang in his ears; and he was haunted by the dark figure of the hussar as he had seen him spring from the earth, dusky and indistinct as a phantom soldier, or as a figure in a dream.

As Antoine and his comrades drew near the barracks, they heard the tattoo, and saw those soldiers who had been out, hurrying on towards the gates.

"Ah!" cried one of those who had served as seconds in the duel, "I forgot to tell you the news, Charpentier. Whilst you were out, we got the route!"

"The route!" cried Antoine sharply.

"The route, neither more nor less. We're off to

Lyons to-morrow: that is to say, one division; the other, with head-quarters, follows the next day."

"When did we get this route?"

"About twelve o'clock; just after you started for your day's leave. Your duel put it clean out of my head."

Antoine swore; and Antoine raved; and Antoine thought that he had never loved Laure Michel so much: yet notwithstanding all this, he marched at five o'clock the next morning, without taking leave of his beloved; without appearing before her as the conqueror of Renaud; and without receiving her smiles and praises in return for the danger he had run.

Antoine never beheld Laure again.

Shortly after his departure, she began to think it a great pity that he should have shot Renaud; who would, after all, she said to herself, have made a good husband, to console her for the loss of Charpentier. That worthy left Paris, after a sojourn of six months' duration, greatly advanced in worldly knowledge; leaning very strongly towards republicanism; and, to a certain extent, beginning to totter towards a fall into free-thinking. He was the darling of his company; the favourite of all his acquaintance; the life and soul of merry doings; well looked on by the fair

sex, and, as far as his knowledge went, an excellent soldier.

Arsène left Paris with a weary longing for tranquil home; a great disgust for the opinions of the times; with a conviction that the then state of things could never last.

From time to time he had ventured, for Nanette's sake, to point out to Antoine the mistakes he deemed him to be committing in his way of life; as well as the danger of the irreligious opinions he was sucking in from loose books and wild bravadoing discourses.

Advice, when asked for, is alas! generally neglected; and the honest, candid giver thereof looked upon less kindly than he was before. Advice given, unasked for, from a sense of duty and friendship, for the most part leaves the being to whom it is given, just where he was, as regards his faults; whilst his adviser is looked upon with more than an evil eye for ever after.

Antoine took Arsène's friendly advisings in very bad part. He began to find it troublesome to have an old friend, whose opinions were so different from his own, watching both mind and body. He, therefore, contrived to get into another company; wounded Arsène by telling him that his words and deeds

were no affair of his; and from that time forth saw as little of him as possible.

Such was the state of things between the two Normans, when, with the "—*ème de ligne*," they arrived at Lyons.

The six months passed by Antoine in Paris amidst gaiety and excitement, had passed far differently with Nanette.

During the first part of that period, her principal amusement had been learning to write, under the teaching of Maître Charpentier, in order that she might be able to pen letters to Antoine. Every evening the old man gave her a lesson. From pothooks and hangers, formed with the square-nibbed pen *à la française*, which looks like a square-toed shoe, Nanette soon got into letters; descending rapidly through all the gradations, from large to small hand.

Every spare moment she gave to writing. Great was her joy when her first letter to Antoine was written, folded, sealed, and sent to the post by the *facteur rural;* who travelled from village to village to deliver and pick up letters. He was a tall spare old man, whose huge sabots seemed far too large and heavy for his long, hard, calfless legs. He wore a pair of postillion's cast-off leather breeches, and a velveteen jacket with short, full tails; his head being

decked by a white cotton night-cap, topped by an immense three-cornered hat.

This postman, le père Quesnel, carried an old fowling-piece, with powder, shot, and a game-bag; for he was in the habit of doing a little shooting as he went his rounds. Being a good shot, he managed to bag a fair show of game; some of which he sold to those who could afford to buy, dividing the rest between himself and those who were poorer than he was.

The sight of le père Quesnel, in his great cocked hat and boat-like sabots, always sent a ray of joy to Nanette's heart. The report of his gun in the distance was to her what the *toc-toc* of the red-coated London postman is unto many a noble damsel. She could distinguish it from the report of any other gun, and could judge from the sound how far he was from the village.

The old postman always gave her a letter from Antoine with a sly smile, and a bow that smelt of the *ancienne régime;* she taking the epistle from him with a blush, which she generally attempted to hide by stooping down to give a piece of crust to Flandrin, le père Quesnel's great, rough, ugly, amiable, faithful dog.

"I call him Flandrin," the old sporting postman

would say, "because he is such a great ugly thing; poor fellow. *V'là pourquoi que je l'appelons comme ça; mais, tout de même, je l'aimons comme mon fils—ah, 'bin' oui, que je l'aimons—allez!*"

Of course Nanette read Antoine's letters over and over again, till she knew them by heart. She could repeat them to herself as she went about her daily toil; and she put them carefully by in the old oak chest, with her wedding dress, and the silver-embroidered Norman cap.

Though Nanette grieved over Antoine's absence, she felt proud of him as being a soldier; and when, soon after he arrived at Lyons, le père Quesnel brought her a letter, announcing that he had obtained his first stripes, and that he was actually a corporal, she, in her innocence, felt as much delighted as though he had become a marshal.

It was Flandrin who had brought her this welcome letter; trotting up to her with the epistle in his mouth, the old postman having taught him to do so.

The great dog looked full of conscious virtue, as he raised his head, that she might take the letter from him. From that day forth Flandrin was made to deliver Antoine's letters to Nanette; who, when le père Quesnel appeared in the distance, always

looked to see if the good old dog carried a white paper in his mouth.

Arsène, in writing to his father and mother, never failed to send a kind and friendly message to Nanette; saying that Antoine was well, that he was becoming a good soldier, that she would not know him in his uniform, with his large moustache, &c. &c.: but he never gave any particulars as to his friend's amusements, infidelities, and mode of life.

July, 1794, gave a fresh turn to public affairs; likewise bringing Daridolle in great haste to his estate of "Lacedæmonia," as he was pleased to call it: so classical and enamoured of liberty was Daridolle.

On the 28th of July, called in the jargon of that day "*le neuf Thermidor*," the execution of the craven tyrant Robespierre took place.

There is something frightfully and hideously squalid in the mode of his death; ignoble as that of a rat struggling in a sewer, knocked down, mutilated, and killed with many blows.

He had not courage to face the public death to which he had sent so many of his fellow beings; neither had he nerve enough to free himself by his own hand from the scaffold he dreaded. The shot by which he meant to end his impious days only

broke his jaw. He was put on a litter and taken to the Conciergerie, like some miserable pauper carried to an hospital.

The next day he appeared on the platform of the guillotine, before a shoal of fierce people longing for his blood.

He looked like a murdered corpse arisen from the grave. His broken jaw was tied up by a dirty cloth spotted with his blood; there was no courage in his sunken eyes: women had died on that very scaffold with more bravery than the great Robespierre.

He attempted to speak to the people. Sanson, the far-famed executioner, untied the bandage which bound his face; his shattered jaw fell, giving a yet more ghastly expression to his pale visage, whilst he rent the air by a loud cry of pain and agony.

In a few minutes more his head fell into the basket; and long-echoing shouts of delight and applause arose from the thickly packed crowd around the guillotine.

Robespierre's short earthly life was at an end: his soul must live to all eternity.

This horrible beheading was brought about by a change in the wind of politics; it put an end to the Reign of Terror, properly so called: though terrible deeds were still committed.

The citizen Mucius, who had exhibited himself with great conceit and vanity as a Terrorist, now thought fit to disappear for awhile: more especially as "my uncle Gracchus of the Convention" had, with others, been safely lodged in prison.

Deeming the coast to be clear, little Daridolle's first care on arriving at "Lacedæmonia" was to pay his court to Nanette, who loathed the very sight of the pigmy.

Daridolle, whose vanity would not suffer him to dream for an instant that any woman *could* dislike him, chose to look upon Nanette's rebuffs as a little coquetry, which could not last for ever.

The amiable coquetry, however, gave no symptoms of lessening; on the contrary it seemed to gather strength from day to day. One morning, indeed, this coquetry wore a very bold and awful look. Little Daridolle, knowing Nanette to be alone, had sprung with a kind of hop, skip, and jump into the cottage; had fallen upon his knees, and had proceeded to make love in a violent, rantipole, and alarming manner.

Nanette rushed to the table, seized a large knife, and solemnly vowed that if he dared again to draw near to her, his days were numbered.

Daridolle looked on Nanette's knit brows, flashing eyes, and pale cheeks; and the little coward felt no

vocation to brave the long, pointed knife, though it was held aloft by the trembling hand of a country girl.

As he stood at a respectful distance, arguing, begging, threatening, and stamping, the door, which was ajar, was slowly pushed open by a canine paw, and honest Flandrin trotted into the room, a letter in his mouth.

At the same time le père Quesnel's high, cracked tenor was heard singing "Malbrouc"—an air to which he was in the habit of marching, as he went his round.

Nanette ran out at the open door, nearly throwing herself into the old postman's arms; so safe and reassured did she feel on hearing his voice.

"*Têdié*, Mam'selle Nanette," cried le père Quesnel, seeing how agitated she looked, "*qu'est que c'est que ce 'coutiau?' Qu'est qu'il y a donc; nom d'un petit bonhomme?*"

On learning what had taken place, old Quesnel cocked his gun and opened the pan; then, taking up his post in the doorway, he levelled his piece; accurately covering poor little citizen Mucius.

The citizen uttered a faint laugh; pretending to think le père Quesnel very witty and full of fun; but he did not like the gleam of the old man's determined eye.

Daridolle, still giving vent to little hysterical laughs, shifted his place; the black mouth of the gun veering after him wherever he turned; the postman keeping a dogged and ominous silence.

At length le père Quesnel, in an ogre's voice, counted :—

"*Un—deux—et—*" before he could say "*trois*" the little citizen had, with a shriek, bolted under the table.

This was too much for the old postman, as well as for Nanette; who, in spite of her late terror, joined him in laughing till the tears ran down their cheeks; Flandrin adding to their mirth by barking at Daridolle, and charging him whenever he attempted to crawl out from his four-legged fortress.

When le père Quesnel helped him to emerge, citizen Mucius began, rather timidly, to show off Convention airs.

"That won't do, *petit bonhomme*," said the old man, uncocking his gun—"You must beg Mam'selle Nanette's pardon; and promise good conduct for the time to come."

Daridolle began to bluster, but was cut short by the postman.

"Ta, ta, ta!" he said, taking a long pinch of snuff, "that's all nonsense. One don't read one's paper for

nothing. Your Convention is smashed; your uncle Gracchus may think himself lucky if he wears a head this day year; and as for you—why—you know you are a Terrorist and a *polisson;* and we have only to point out your retreat to the Thermidoriens, and give you a character, to get you shut up; and—— you understand!"

Le père Quesnel winked, and hit the nape of his neck expressively with the side of his hand, that Daridolle might the more readily seize his meaning.

The citizen thought it best to beg Nanette's pardon, to promise future good conduct; and so make the best of his way to the orchard gate.

When there he turned; and, shaking his club-stick at Nanette and le père Quesnel, he shrieked in strangled tones:—"*Je me vengerai—vengerai—vengerai—rai—rai—rai—et diablement bien aussi; vous verrez!*"

With these words he disappeared; but the postman insisted on leaving Flandrin to guard Nanette until he should return from his rounds.

A few mornings after citizen Mucius' signal defeat, a small, shrivelled, mahogany-visaged old man presented himself at la veuve Langlois' door; having first tied an extraordinary-looking piebald nag to the gate.

"*Salut et fraternité,*" quoth the little old man, without touching his hat.

The widow looked up from the cream cheeses she was ranging for sale in a flat basket, and returned the republican's greeting.

"I come," he said, "from the citizen Mucius; I am his bailiff."

"With all my heart, citizen. What next?"

"Your daughter has offended monsieur—I mean citizen Mucius; and I am here as delegate from him to her."

The bailiff cleared his throat loudly as he uttered these words; to which the widow replied that citizen Daridolle was the most debased of men, and that the sooner his "delegate" departed the better.

The bailiff frowned, but persevered. A good round sum was to be his, if he succeeded in his mission; wherefore he poured into the widow's ears a list of all the citizen Mucius would lay at Nanette's feet, if she would but listen to his designs.

La veuve Langlois, without speaking a word, took the little fragile skeleton who addressed her by the shoulders, and, by her sheer weight, turned him out of the house.

The bailiff mounted his high-boned, rat-tailed piebald; from the back of which he addressed the widow.

"Is this your ultimatum?" he asked.

"I don't understand Latin," she replied; "but I advise you and citizen Daridolle not to appear here again. If I were either of you, I should be afraid to be alone after dark. You are two wicked philosophers; and as for Nanette's listening to your master, you may tell him that she is the *fiancée* of a soldier of the republic, a corporal; and is not to be insulted by a *misérable* such as M. Daridolle."

"Then take that, you old idiot; you deserve it for your folly. It is a notice to quit your domicile within a week, by order of citizen Mucius; who intends his houses to be occupied only by those who are zealous for the good of the nation."

So saying the bailiff threw a paper at the widow; and was borne away at a daisy-cutting trot by his tall spectral-looking horse.

When Nanette came in from the orchard, she found la veuve Langlois very irate, yet inclined to cry.

On hearing what had taken place, Nanette sighed deeply: the mother and daughter being both sorely grieved at the prospect before them. By means of their orchard, cows, spinning, and frugality, they contrived to lead a tolerably thriving life; their rent being low and easily paid; and now they had but a

week to look out for another cottage : a thing difficult to be found just then.

La veuve Langlois had lived in that same cot ever since her wedding-day, and Nanette was born there.

Maître Charpentier being called in to advise with them, they all agreed that the evil was without remedy : that the widow and Nanette *must* leave ; it being impossible for them to degrade themselves either by submitting to Daridolle's plans, or by begging for his mercy.

When the inhabitants of St. Eloy heard what had befallen the widow, their indignation was great against citizen Mucius ; whilst their pity for their neighbours was as great as their indignation against the persecutor of the widow and her daughter.

Maître Charpentier wished to give up his little two-roomed cottage to them, and take a room for himself elsewhere ; but to this generous plan Nanette and her mother would, of course, not listen.

The old Potiers, too, entreated them to come to the mill ; and all those who were able opened their doors to them. All these kind offers they refused ; determined to trust to heaven and to their own industry.

Since Antoine's departure Nanette had begun to

make a little fund of her savings; to be put aside for herself and her husband. She thought that if her *fiancé* should return from the army with the loss of a foot or a hand, a leg or an arm, he would be obliged to look to her for support; and she had already begun to provide for him.

La veuve Langlois soon found it to be impossible to meet with any dwelling beyond a hut, at the same rent she gave for her cottage; that being only nominal: from the favour the Langlois family had stood in with the late seigneur's father, it had been so ever since his day.

There was nothing else to be done: the widow and her daughter must leave their cottage, with the fruitful, profitable orchard; sell their cows, and use Nanette's little fund to pay for the repairs insisted on by Daridolle; and so be turned adrift on the world.

"*Allons, chère mère,*" said Nanette—"do not let us be cast down. There is a good reason for everything that happens to us; and we have led so easy a life, that we ought to expect a few crosses by this time, and take them humbly, yet cheerfully. I meant to go over to the great farmer at Saen, and beg him to take me into his service. I can spin, knit; make butter, cheese, bread; and even *boules, gallettes, douil-*

lons and *brioches :* thanks to you, *chère mère.* I can take care of the cows, and I am ready to do any work in the world. M. le curé used to say, that no one should consider himself above the duties of the station where misfortunes have placed him; and Maître Charpentier's paper says that our nobles and priests are in far distant lands, teaching French, dancing, fencing, and working for a livelihood; at which the wicked paper rejoices. We shall be like two '*Marquises,*' then *ma mère !*"

La veuve Langlois was just as ready to work as Nanette; who started off betimes the next morning for Saen, there to try and find employment.

The farmer, being a royalist, was doubly disgusted at citizen Mucius' conduct, as proceeding from a Terrorist. He had heard of it before Nanette's visit, having been informed of it by le père Quesnel; who delighted in telling the story wherever he went, with an account of Daridolle's fright, and the silly figure he cut under the table.

The farmer agreed to take Nanette into his service at once, and to let her mother have a *cabanne* on his land, for half the rent she had given for her cottage.

"I must do a little *pour l'amour de Dieu,*" said Harivel, the farmer, laughing good-naturedly; and exhibiting by so doing a very red tongue, and very

white teeth. "Your mother shall have some chickens of her own, and a cow; and we'll do what we can to make you happy."

Nanette returned home in great glee.

"*Ah! ma mère,*" she said, "you see heaven has not left us alone in the world. Our new cot is not so pretty as this, but the walls are very thick, though they *are* of mud; and the sun shines pleasantly upon it. I am to leave you every morning to go to my work, and to return to you in the evening. We shall be very happy I know; though we shall miss poor Maître Charpentier."

La veuve Langlois kissed her daughter loudly on each cheek; then cried, then laughed, as was her wont when pleased.

In spite of their best endeavours, the widow and Nanette could not help feeling cast down on leaving St. Eloy and all their old friends there.

They took a sad farewell of the bare walls of their cottage; embraced the poor old schoolmaster; and with Croquemitaine in a basket and Tonton trotting after, they set out for their new abode.

The cot, which was to be their home, was a long, low, mud building; with walls of great thickness, and a high thatched roof.

It contained but one room; in the raftered ceil-

ing of which was a trap-door. The trap-door was reached by a sturdy-looking, thick-ringed ladder; it gave entrance to the roof; and this was divided into two bedrooms of equal size; each lighted by a window looking towards the south, over a plain of green meadows and orchards bordered by distant hills.

The floor of the lower room was of clay; the chimney was large and deep; the windows were small, giving but little light, yet letting in the mid-day sun in all his glory.

Nanette's old oak chest was at one end of the room, the widow's press at the other; and all the other well-known furniture was, by the new inhabitants, disposed to the greatest advantage.

Croquemitaine was the only one of the party who seemed to object to the new dwelling: but then cats are eccentric on the subject of a change of abode. As for Tonton, he lapped a great deal of water after his journey, then throwing himself down in the sunshine before the door, he sighed, and settled himself for sleep, as though he thought: "Well! this shall be *my* place; and a nice warm place it is!"

On going to bed, the widow and Nanette drew up the ladder after them; the room with the trap being Nanette's, she shut the door; and there was great

mirth between them on the subject of their new-fashioned staircase.

If that spiteful personage, *le citoyen* Daridolle Mucius, could have looked into the souls of his victims, as they fell into a quiet sleep, he would have been very wrathful, and most bitterly disappointed.

Instead of the grief, fear, discontent, and misery, he had intended should fill their hearts with murmurs and rage; he would have beheld resignation, cheerfulness, content, and trust in heaven: qualities of which little impious Daridolle had not the most distant idea.

Nanette was up with the dawn on the following morning; ready to start for her new place, and her hard work. Before she did so, however, she put out la veuve Langlois' breakfast in readiness for her; fed the favourite canary; saw that the ladder was placed firmly and steadily; and then, kissing her mother, sped away over the fields, with a light heart and a country appetite.

The dew was sparkling like diamonds all around her; even the cobwebs, finer than hairs, bore the little glittering drops: diamonds so light that they did not break the web on which they hung.

Leaves, furze, woodbine, foxglove and blades of

grass, were all fresh with thousands and millions of clear, limpid dew-drops.

When Nanette reached Harivel's large, old Norman farm-house, she with the rest of the servants were all regaled with a breakfast composed of large *hunches* of household bread, cut from the huge, thick, flat loaf; and to which was added home-made *confiture*, as well as cheese for those who liked it better. Of this breakfast they partook as they stood before the door, in the sunshine, talking and laughing together. A draught of cider completed their repast, when they all went to their several works.

Men were even then beginning to be scarce in France: that is, young and active men. This being the case, some part of their toil fell to the share of the women. Nanette, who was determined to refuse no labour that might fall to her lot, led horses to water at even; and drove the pigs home from the woods.

On returning to her mother at night, she brought her a quantity of yarn from the farm, which the veuve Langlois was to spin; amusing her parent, as they supped, with an account of her first day's service.

"*Ah! ma pauvre enfant,*" cried the widow, looking compassionately at Nanette, "you must be very tired.

Perhaps, after all, it would have been better if you *had* married Antoine."

"What, *ma mère*, by civil contract? Oh! no. A clear conscience, with good, honest, hard work, is better than ease, even with Antoine, and a conscience full of reproaches and torment."

"You are right, my child: but you must be *very* tired."

"Only a little; I shall get more and more used to my new work every day, and so feel it less and less as my strength increases. I wish, though, that we could have Sunday back again instead of the *décade;* for the servants at the farm told me it is so tiring, both for human beings and for cattle, to go ten days without a rest."

"Ah! *cocotte*, when *shall* we have Sunday back again; and our mass and religious duties? I wonder poor, unhappy France is not swept from the face of the earth!"

Nanette sighed, and made answer:

"I treasure up all that M. le curé said, and all he taught me. His words have been my solace and encouragement in my trouble: may he rest in peace!"

"Perhaps," said the widow after a pause, "our princes and their army may soon come, now, and

restore some little order. We miss Maître Charpentier's news, ma Nanette!"

"Oh!" cried Nanette, reddening, "don't talk of that army, *chère mère*. It was once my daily hope; but if they came *now*, Antoine would have to fight against his own legitimate princes, or to desert. I never think of it at all: it is too discouraging!"

Day by day Nanette toiled for the support of herself and her mother; the widow likewise spinning and doing all in her power to add to their little stock of money.

On the *décade* they would sometimes walk over to their *own* village, to visit first one old friend and then another; to talk over bygone times, and to hear the various letters received from the young men who had joined the army: thanks to Daridolle and his uncle Gracchus.

The little republican had not found a tenant for the widow's cottage, as he persevered in asking too high a rent; besides which, he was so overbearing and dishonest, that no one felt very anxious to become his tenant.

His own villa was rising story by story; he still remaining, when in the country, at the little farm; scandalising his rustic neighbours by the choice spirits who sometimes came with him from Paris. Ac-

tresses, bad characters of all kinds, both male and female, were his companions ; feasting and gambling were their diversions.

Late into the night, lights might be seen shining from the windows of the room in which this goodly company disported themselves ; loud laughing and talking might be heard therefrom.

One night the report of fire-arms rang through the dark air. A ruined gamester, after exciting himself with champagne, had reeled into the orchard ; and there, in darkness and solitude, had scattered his heated brains on all sides with a pistol-shot.

From that night, strong countrymen would hurry along as though pursued, when forced to pass, after dusk, the spot made awful by suicide ; and where, at the foot of a tree, the body of the gambler had been buried.

Hard work did not drive Nanette's love from her heart ; misfortunes only seemed to fix it there more firmly. The sight of Flandrin letter-carrying became more welcome to her than ever ; the good dog would find her out even when her toil carried her to woods and fields ; deposit the letter he was charged with ; receive pats and praises in return, and so dash back again to his master.

Six months had passed ; then a year ; then six

months more; then two years. It was two whole years since Antoine had marched off in the grey mist to become a soldier of the republic: two whole years since he and Nanette had parted.

Antoine at the end of that time was quartered at Grenoble: his arm was decked with a serjeant's stripes; and his heart longing for the *contre-épaulette* of a *sous-lieutenant.*

"Once get that grade," he said to himself, "and I will not stop till I am colonel!—Colonel?—General, I should say. What is to prevent it? Nothing, *pardi!*"

The serjeant *pro tem.* and general *in prospectu* still loved Nanette, although not with the ardour of his village days; or in proportion to the firm, faithful love she felt for him. Nevertheless he did love her; and got a fortnight's leave, exclusive of the time taken up by his journey to and fro, wherein to return to his birthplace, to visit his father, *fiancée*, and friends.

Arsène went with him. This rather damped Antoine's delight, as he had long ceased to care for Arsène; who still loved him, little dreaming that Serjeant Charpentier looked on him in the light of a bore: so however it was.

Arsène had, as well as his friend, reached the

grade of serjeant; but he felt none of Antoine's aspirations after further rank: his only aspiration was to see the term of his service expire, when he should be able to retire to the mill, and to his old calling.

As they journeyed along, Antoine let fall divers hints that it would perhaps be as well not to enter into any details concerning their military life; more especially before Nanette and her mother.

"Women take fright all about nothing; they can't understand a soldier, and think little frolics great sins: at least, Nanette would. A soldier is not a *calotin*, you know, serjeant; and so—and so—it's best perhaps not to scare the women with one's little adventures—Eh! don't you think so? Don't you agree with me?"

Saying these words, Serjeant Charpentier beheaded with his cane a thistle growing by the roadside, whilst Arsène calmly replied:

"*Mon ami*, you need not fear any indiscretion on my part. I will be like Corporal Poisson of my company, who never talks of anything but himself."

"*A la bonne heure:*" cried Antoine, as he twirled his stick, and then began whistling a march; whilst Arsène stept along with his eyes to the ground; thinking, as he went, that it was not unlikely that

Nanette might have given her faithful heart to a man who did not prize the gift as he ought to do.

At the time of which we are writing, the French army was not remarkable for the quantity of food it received; neither for the attention given to its clothing; nor for the regularity of its pay; consequently the men in general wore a somewhat meagre and threadbare appearance; yet with a certain *ready-to-fight* air, which was not belied by their deeds.

Poor Arsène was as lank and famished-looking as any soldier in the republican army. His brown cheeks fell in below his cheekbone; the hard muscles of his jaw were distinctly seen to work, when he enjoyed the relaxation of eating; his chin was lean and sharp, poking out with hungry air over his narrow black stock. His sun-burnt hands too were stringy and bony; as was all the rest of his body; yet he was strong and active, and ready for any service he might be set to. His immense fair moustache hung over his mouth, drooping down at the corners thereof; his hair was tied behind in a short thick club, according to regulation.

Antoine, though lean, was in far better condition than his fellow-traveller; for Antoine possessed the art of insinuating himself into the good graces of civilians, cooks included; by which means he partook,

at bye times, of many a nice little repast in kitchens, and little dark rooms behind shops; and thus snapped his fingers at stale *pain de munition*, and uncertain rations.

The two soldiers had not written to announce their intended visit at St. Eloy, meaning it to be a surprise.

As they trudged into the village at sunset, dusty, tired, hungry, and thirsty, the little boys flocked about them and ran by their side; but not one of them knew who they were: even the two serjeants' old acquaintances looked upon them without recollecting them.

Their native place appeared to them to be very small, very deserted, and very silent; the great chesnut tree, which shaded the little fountain in the middle of the *place*, was the only thing which to their eyes wore the same appearance that it did in bygone times.

Arsène left Antoine at his father's door; cast a melancholy look on Nanette's late home, now falling into a state of dilapidation; and then, with a beating heart, stept out manfully, the sooner to reach the long-sighed for mill;—the sooner to embrace his beloved father and mother.

The surprise and joy of the Potiers, and of poor

old Charpentier, in again beholding their respective sons, were almost too much for them. There were great lamentations on the part of the miller and his wife over the haggard looks of Arsène ; whilst they viewed the chevrons on his arm with a kind of respectful admiration. As for the schoolmaster, he stood beside his son's chair, his withered, trembling hand resting on Antoine's shoulder, and utterly unable to take his eyes off him.

The day after the arrival of the two serjeants being the *décade*, Antoine was up betimes ; whilst Arsène in his bed slept soundly after the march of the day before, and the good supply of food wherewith his mother had regaled him, in order to make him look less like an "*es*quelette," as old Mme. Potier called it.

Antoine was busily engaged in pipe-claying breeches, waistcoat, and belts ; brushing his shabby jacket, gaiters, and hat; furbishing his buttons; tying his queue ; and oiling his hair and moustache: which last was twirled to a sharp point, and turned up to his eyes.

Antoine put on a fine linen shirt, and a new stock ; contributions from fair victims at Lyons and Grenoble ; then, completing his toilette, he adjusted his white shoulder-belt, so that the point of his short

sword, (called a "*briquet*" among the soldiers,) should just be seen beyond his right calf, by any spectator standing in front of him. The serjeant having sprinkled himself with a perfume smelling of bergamotte and brandy, which mingled with the odour of pipe-clay and tobacco that floated around him, descended to dazzle his old father, and to have his breakfast; of which he partook with canine voracity.

This being duly finished, Maître Charpentier and his son set out for la veuve Langlois' cot; Antoine being greeted by many an old friend as he went: they recollecting him directly on seeing him with his father.

When an author finds great difficulty in placing any event before the eyes of his reader's mind, he generally makes short work of it, by announcing that —"it is more easily imagined than described."

That would be the easiest way to touch upon the feelings of Nanette on once again beholding Antoine.

Her joy and surprise were far too great for words when she saw him coming across the meadow with the schoolmaster. She knew him directly, in spite of uniform, drill, and military air: knew him as she did Maître Charpentier, with his drooping gait, rusty black suit, his great hands and thin flat wrists

hanging from his short sleeves, and flapping about as he paced along.

Nanette called to her mother through the trap-door that Antoine was coming, and then sped swift as an arrow to meet him.

The serjeant also flew towards his *fiancée;* who suddenly stopped, blushed, and half-turned away; abashed by her lover's bold military tournure.

La veuve Langlois came up; heartily embraced the soldier; told him that she should not have known him again, he had become such a *beau garçon;* exclaimed vociferously at his black, twirled moustache; and vowed that he appeared an inch or two taller than he did in the days when he wore sabots, and went about with round back and drooping head.

This noisy greeting gave Nanette an opportunity of looking at Antoine, unseen by him. There he stood; not the Antoine who left her two years before, but an Antoine so superior in her eyes to her much-loved rustic *fiancé*, that Nanette was then and there struck by the uncomfortable idea that he was far above her, and far too good for her. He looked so handsome, so brave, so gay and so kind, that he quite effaced from her mind Antoine the villager; reigning supreme in her heart as Antoine the soldier, far above every man on earth for goodness,

bravery, and every good quality of mind and body.

Poor Nanette! how little she knew that handsome, vain, conceited, pleasing, selfish *mauvais sujet*, Antoine Charpentier!

That *décade* passed delightfully for Nanette; and eke for the serjeant; who was very much charmed with the fresh, healthy beauty of his *fiancée*, besides being flattered and enchanted by the effect he evidently had on her: made visible by the artless and modest admiration with which she regarded him and listened to all he had to say, and that was much.

Antoine was master of all the "lover's business" he had seen on the stage of the theatres at Paris, Lyons, and Grenoble. He knew by heart all the lover's phrases and gestures; and these he had often played off with the greatest success in those towns: modified according to the degree of innocence or worldly knowledge, as well as according to the various characters, of the fair beings he laid siege to.

Serjeant Charpentier did his best before his present audience; greatly exulting at the tender applause visible in Nanette's soft, loving eyes, as well as in the embarrassment she felt in answering all the fine things he said to her.

In the course of the day Arsène called to see his

old friends, and remained to dine with them : having first of all helped the widow to cook the dinner ; whilst Nanette and her lover, followed by Tonton, strolled about the meads, andMaître Charpentier took a nap ; his huge chocolate-coloured handkerchief being spread like a veil over his head and face.

Serjeant Potier had none of the male coquetry of Serjeant Charpentier. He left his "*grand tenu*," together with his "*briquet*" and shoulder-belt, at his quarters ; appearing before his friends perfectly neat and clean, but in his second-best leather breeches, an ill-fitting fatigue jacket of coarse blue cloth, with yellow cuffs and collar, together with a blue and yellow "*bonnet de police*," which had seen its best days.

He sighed as from time to time he cast his looks through the open doorway ; and beheld Antoine and Nanette in the meadow. His love for her was as different from Charpentier's, as were the looks and dress of the two soldiers. Arsène loved Nanette for herself, steadily and faithfully ; whereas there was a great deal of froth and vanity, fickleness and selfishness mixed up with Antoine's blazing passion.

At dinner the gay serjeant ate, drank, laughed, and talked to his heart's content ; whilst Potier controlled his gnawing appetite out of regard to the

poverty of his entertainers : which being perceived by Serjeant Charpentier, he ever and anon addressed his friend, saying :

"*Dis donc, tu ne manges pas ; toi qui as toujours faim !*"

Arsène was moreover very silent ; for it pained his heart and vexed his soul, to see Antoine captivating innocent, fresh, virtuous Nanette, by the same second-hand theatrical airs and phrases wherewith he was in the habit of making his way among far different beings.

His vexation rose to ire, hard to be suppressed, when he saw Antoine give her a little, slight, garnet ring ; which ring Arsène had often seen him exhibit as a love-gift from a most despicable woman at Grenoble.

" Mam'selle Nanette !" he cried, in low, stifled, and trembling tones, as his idol put the ring on her well-formed brown hand ; then he checked himself, clenched his fists, and walked to the door.

No one had heard his words ; and no one saw the angry frown that wrinkled his honest, open forehead ; neither did they wot of the love, wrath, hatred, and contempt that were agitating his soul ; for at that moment hatred and contempt arose within him for his former friend Antoine.

"It is like beholding an evil spirit, tempting a saint," said Arsène to himself: "*Je n'y tiens plus!*"

This being the case, he somewhat suddenly took leave of the assembled company; who all declared him to be ill, so taciturn had he been, and so haggard did he look.

"They will soon fatten him at the mill," cried Antoine. "He is a very strange fellow, quite unlike all the rest of the regiment: he is only fit for a hermit, or to take care of a lighthouse. I don't believe he was ever in love in his life, or ever will be. He's a regular *drôle de corps.*"

The Charpentiers did not leave the widow's till night, when the moon lighted them on their way; Antoine, in tremendous spirits at the success which had attended his performances on that day, singing as he went; relating military adventures to his father; and telling himself that, after all, Nanette was the freshest, prettiest girl he had seen for some time; and that if she continued to please him, he might, when higher up in his profession, think of fulfilling his engagement and making her his wife.

"How lucky it was," thought this gay serjeant, as he composed himself to sleep—"how lucky it was that dear little Nanette would have nothing to say to the civil contract, little bigot as she is! If we had

been married, I should never have tasted the delights, or partaken of the glory of military life; as it is I taste the one, and hope before long to partake of the other. I should have been plodding away at agriculture, or some such convict's labour, for the last two years, whereas *j'ai mené un train de diable?* Ah! country boys are poor sheepish oafs, especially when they are in love; mooning and gaping about like so many *gobbe-mouches!*"

Here the soldier yawned, turned on the other side, and, three minutes after, fell into a deep sleep.

Arsène's thoughts, as slumber crept over him, were not so satisfactory as Antoine's; but he brought all the power of his mind into play, in order to drive discontent and other bad feelings far from him.

"I should not care half so much," he thought, "if Antoine loved Nanette faithfully. I see how it will be: he will one day give her up; and she will break her heart about it. Years will not improve him: it is a sad look-out!"

And so, with a sigh, and a heavy heart, Arsène fell asleep.

As for Nanette, she was kept long waking by the recollection of Serjeant Charpentier, and all he had said to her; as well as by vague fears of distant wars, bringing wounds and perhaps death to An-

toine: wars in which *he* only saw the road to promotion and glory. Then again she would think of his final return, his term of service being over; when they should marry, and never again know what absence meant. She felt certain that so noble a being as her lover appeared to her to be, could never be faithless, or forget the love of his youth; and yet, at the same time, she deemed herself to be utterly unworthy of the heart of so perfect a being as she considered the young serjeant to be. Thus between love, hope, and fear, Nanette at length closed her eyes and slept.

Of the three friends of childhood, it was only Antoine who fell asleep in a state of perfect content, as well as of unmixed self-satisfaction.

Arsène and Nanette, however, with all they might have to vex them, were at heart happier people than Antoine, with all his airy gaiety and carelessness; for they possessed good principles and righteous souls; which Antoine entirely lacked. Besides future military rank, he only thought of present pleasures; whilst *they* looked calmly beyond either present joy or present woe; thus tempering delight and softening grief.

Both Arsène and Nanette had been the poor curé's especial care among all the village children. They

had well repaid the pains he bestowed on them: they remembered all his advice, and all his words; which, as they reflected on the night in question, came to their memory to soothe them, like a gentle voice heard from the skies.

The two serjeants of course found many alterations in the state of things at St. Eloy. It is hardly possible to be absent, even a fortnight, from the smallest village, without hearing, on your return, of changes which you would not have noticed if you had been present. Besides births and deaths (marriages had been very scarce), the soldiers found many an alteration in their native village.

Among other changes, those among the inhabitants of St. Eloy, who were able to carry a musket, had turned into national guards: of which corps of theirs, these Normans were not a little proud.

Serjeants Potier and Charpentier were entreated to give a few hints, and to superintend their drill; which request the soldiers readily granted. They found that drilling amateur soldiers was a far different thing from drilling real men of war: the amateurs having wills of their own; besides being apt to fall out and go home, directly they deemed they had had enough for one day.

The surrounding villages likewise boasted of na-

tional guards, who would come over and take a part in the drill of the St. Eloy force, conducted by the two serjeants.

These troops of the nation went through the manual after a fashion, and the platoon without powder; as for manœuvres, they could wheel back into open column from what they considered to be line; then forward into line again; and this was the extent of their knowledge. The manner in which they went through their wheelings and marchings, would not have earned the applause of the old general officer, who, on inspecting an infantry corps, was so delighted with their precision, that he burst forth in their praise, saying:

"By Jove! they march like a wall and wheel like a gate."

It was arranged that in honour of the presence at St. Eloy of serjeants Potier and Charpentier, a field-day should take place on the *décade;* at which the "*battallions*" of five villages should be "*brigaded*" together.

Potier was requested to take the command, while Charpentier was to be the reviewing officer.

This was great sport for the two soldiers, who were, after the field-day, to *assist* at a feast given by farmer Harivel on the occasion.

On the day appointed, the several corps assembled on the *grande place* of Saen ; a square of tolerable size, and without impediment of tree or fountain.

Each *régiment* arrived with its drummer ; that of Saen, the strongest of the whole, having two drummers and a *sapeur !* The latter was the village blacksmith, who filled the post in virtue of the leather apron ; which carried it over the wood-cutter's axe, because the apron was far too large for the wood-cutter : who, being a good-natured fellow, figured in the ranks, and gave up his axe to the strong-armed blacksmith.

One of the drummers of Saen was a most remarkable person : and teacher of drum-beating to those of all the neighbouring corps.

This extraordinary drummer was neither more nor less than——an old woman !

Yes ! an old woman : and there she stood in her fête dress, snowy-white cap, and smart black sabots ; her drum by her side, and her black drum-sticks held in true scientific style. La mère Micot was a drummer's daughter, born in the regiment to which her father was attached ; in which she afterwards married the smartest drummer, and brought forth four boys, who in due time actually became drummers in their mamma's native corps.

A drum had been le mère Micot's first plaything; she had been dandled, carried about, spoiled, and petted by drummers; drum-boys had been her playmates; beating the drum had been her show-off accomplishment, and her first effort at learning: in short, la mère Micot and a drum seemed destined for each other.

When she became drummer in the national guard, she was a merry old widow; dwelling with an old bachelor brother at Saen. She was really merry; as merry as a cricket: which little brown thing she somewhat resembled, being small, thin, light, active, and sun-burnt.

La mère Micot was near seventy; hale and strong: a kind of ambulating mummy. Her tanned face was covered with wrinkles and puckers, after the fashion of a walnut; her mouth fell in for lack of teeth; but her fine black eyes burnt like coals, with all the fire of seventeen. Her snow-white hair was turned off her forehead and surmounted by her Norman cap, which she had decorated with a tricoloured riband and cockade. Her little smart, thin, blue-stockinged legs were firmly planted on her sabots; her short scarlet petticoat was striped with broad black stripes.

It must not be supposed that la mère Micot was a

masculine woman; not at all: she had the French-woman's gift of being able to do man's work in a feminine manner, without disgusting the bye-standers by affecting masculine attitudes and tones. La mère Micot beat her drum and taught the same, to the best of her ability, as a matter of course; without setting up for a man, or neglecting her knitting and spinning when she was "off duty."

When the assembled force stood in line on the *place* of Saen, it was not immaculate as to sizing and dressing.

The "*brigade*" presented a waving line, in spite of Arsène's best efforts; at the same time wearing the appearance of the top of a ruined city-wall, here a battlement, there none; so various were the heights, and so chosen at random was the position of the files.

The costume of these patriotic soldiers was anything but uniform. Some among them had second-hand jackets of various regiments; grenadier, chasseur, and even hussar; a cocked hat was visible here and there; but the nether man of the force was essentially "*pékin*," and sabots were not disdained.

The force numbered in all nearly ninety men; exclusive of sapeur, drummers, and la mère Micot.

They had among them fifteen muskets, and twelve pouches; the rest of the fire-arms were fowling-pieces.

Three of the men owned "*briquets*," one a marquis's rapier, and another a cavalry sabre.

Arsène put the *troops* through their two movements. They marched past Antoine "*tambour battant*," to the infinite delight of the assembled spectators; la mère Micot's drum being heard above the others, beaten as it was in the neat, sharp style of a true drummer, whilst the rest beat in a loose slovenly amateur manner, in spite of her exhortation at starting:

"*Allons mes petits choux, faisons parler la peau d'âne! De l' aplomb, de l'attention; et vive le roi—la république, que je voulons dire!*"

There was powder on that grand day; wherefore, when the assembled corps had formed column and line; and vice versâ, besides marching past some half-dozen times, they indulged in an eccentric *feu-de-joie* till the ammunition was all gone, and the air smelt of powder to a most exhilarating degree.

One of the guards having returned his ramrod to the barrel, instead of to the loops, the day was enlivened by an approach to a real accident; the said ramrod having been shot from the musket through le père Quesnel's three-cornered hat.

Nanette, with her mother and Maître Charpentier, stood beside Antoine. How proud she felt of her

handsome soldier-like lover on that day; how happy she was as she sat beside him at farmer Harivel's feast; and how exciting she deemed the moment to be when he arose after the repast, and drawing his *briquet*, held it aloft, making the assembled guards swear to "*mourir pour la patrie.*" He had learnt the trick at the theatre: but it answered very well, and brought forth thunders of applause, as the warriors all stretched forth their hands shouting, "*Nous le jurons!*" The company next proceeded to dance beneath the orchard trees, to the sound of a *chalumeau*, a violin, and la mère Micot's ever ready drum.

How Antoine then distinguished himself! How all the young girls longed to dance with him; and how enchanted those were whom he favoured!

With what force he pointed his toe; with what a spring he bounded up in an *entrechat double;* how diligently he kept his little finger to the seam of his breeches; whilst his thumbs stood at right angles to his hands, through the energy he threw into his movements.

As Nanette gazed on this prodigy of military dancing, she sighed to think that she must again lose him. The moments sped along with cruel fleetness, however, until the leave was up, and the fatal instant of parting was at hand.

Poor Nanette covered her face with her apron, weeping like a child, as Serjeant Charpentier went through his best parting lover's scene; standing somewhat behind her, one hand pressed to his breast, as he stooped towards her; the other holding his hat, his arm being slightly extended; his weight thrown on his right leg, the point of the left foot just touching the ground.

In this attitude, he poured forth into Nanette's ear the conventional *jeune premier's* phrases; she, in her innocence, imagining the words to arise directly from Antoine's heart.

She found no words wherewith to reply to him.

The serjeant covered her trembling hand with thousands of kisses; vowed to love her till death; muttered "adieu, adieu!" with the proper degree of pathetic strangulation, and so rushed from the cot.

When *off the stage*, he became his own applauder, if I may be allowed the word.

"*Ah!*" he cried, "*ça a fait son effet! C'était bien touchant, sacrédi, bien touchant. On sait son rôle au moins: on est galliard où on ne l'est pas! Cette pauvre jeunesse ne m'oubliera pas d'ici à la semaine des trois Jeudis—allez!*"

And so he lighted his pipe, and went his way to join Serjeant Potier, who had taken leave of Nanette

the evening before, with his heart full of sorrow which made no outward show.

Arsène wondered at Antoine's radiant air.

"Your parting don't seem to distress you, Antoine," he said.

"It's no parting; I carry her heart with me! Rather a pretty idea—would do very well in a play; wouldn't it now?"

Potier made no reply; and Charpentier sang and whistled as they walked along.

Nanette, with red eyelids, went forth to her daily task.

"Ah!" she said to herself, as she slowly took her way to the farm, "I must not suffer myself to be cast down; nor allow grief to get the better of me. Everything is for the best; so I will look forward to our next meeting, and work hard for dear Antoine, and for my mother. The time will soon pass; and I will not cease to hope, and to keep up my courage."

Here the remembrance of her lover caused her to sit herself down on a huge stone by the road-side, and again to weep with bursting heart.

She did not check herself: she gave her grief its course till her tears were exhausted; then proceeded on her road, and toiled resolutely throughout the

day, both to do her hard work, and to compose her sorrowful mind.

Nanette had once thought that it would be impossible ever to love Antoine better than she had done in former days; but she found that his visit had increased her love for him a hundred-fold, and that death alone could put an end to it.

If innocent and pure Nanette could have seen Charpentier as he really was, her love would have vanished like a falling meteor; but pure and innocent souls cannot fathom the depravity and pollution of the wicked: they are free from soil or taint, lacking, as it were, the sense whereby to perceive the foulness and spots of a licentious and libertine mind.

So Nanette looked upon Antoine to be the model of all goodness.

Why?

Because she loved him.

The next quarter of the "—ème de ligne" was Nice.

In March, 1796, General Bonaparte was appointed Commander-in-chief of the army of Italy. He was at that time twenty-six years of age, and had been married but twelve days to Mme. Beauharnois—a future empress! Napoleon, however, was not the

man to allow a bride, or any pleasure, to interfere with work. He loved Joséphine, but he could not sigh, smile, and dally, with the Italian war before him ; wherefore, on the 27th of March he arrived, wifeless for a time, at Nice, the head-quarters of the army.

The army of Italy numbered about thirty-one thousand men ; as ragged, starved, and badly-paid a force as was ever gathered together. This miserable-looking multitude was destined to march against the Austrians and Sardinians, in number about eighty thousand ; men well-fed, in good condition, and in a friendly land.

Arsène and Antoine were in as pitiable a plight as the rest of Napoleon's host. Their ribs stood out ; their stomachs, craving and empty, fell in ; their jaws were lank ; their legs thin, and their feet consequently looking large and heavy.

Notwithstanding lack of meat and uncertain rations of bread, Serjeant Charpentier kept up his spirits ; made inroads into the hearts of the fair sex ; gamed ; went to the theatre when any one would treat him ; and added to his other accomplishments that of carrying off, without noise, any stray poultry he met with in his country walks.

Once indeed he captured a young pig ; skinned it ;

rolled it up in his great-coat; carried it in triumph to the barracks; cooked it, and invited the whole of his "*chambrée*" to partake of the savoury smelling feast: which invitation, as may be supposed, they accepted without much pressing.

The first time that Serjeant Charpentier ever beheld the new Commander-in-chief was one afternoon whilst on guard.

The serjeant was playing cards with the corporal, beneath the portico in front of the guard-house. The split stick was perched on the corporal's nose; the largest amount of sous was at Antoine's right hand, there being but two beside the corporal.

Several soldiers were smoking their *brûle-gueules* and looking on; whilst the officer was within, reading a terrific romance, filled with spectres, banditti, subterranean passages, harp-playing heroines, and howling wind.

Suddenly the sentry made it known that the Commander-in-chief was about to pass.

Down went cards, *brûle-gueules*, and romance. The guard turned out, and presented arms as the Commander-in-chief slowly rode past; three officers only being with him.

Charpentier was disappointed as he looked on the new chief. In spite of report, he had persevered in

representing Napoleon to his mind as a tall, large grenadier of a man; more in the Murat style, than the little, pale, thin being before him.

Napoleon was wont to say that in those days he was only a strip of parchment; and, in effect, he did look very little among the officers about him: being smooth-faced too, with his dark brown hair hanging down on each side of his pale cheeks, he would have had a womanish air, from which he was only saved by the determined expression of his delicate features.

He wore the coat of republican cut, with large collar and lappels, then in use. Although it was not a frock, the tails were very long, reaching below the bend of the knee, and cut quite square; in colour, it was blue, as were all the republican uniforms, and embroidered in gold, with large pocket-flaps on the hips. The general wore a wide silk scarf tied round the waist, leather breeches and top-boots. His cocked hat was low, and from the top sprung a bunch of feathers, in form like the plume of a hearse-horse, but tricoloured in hue. Black gauntlets, and a sabre, completed the Commander-in-chief's costume. He returned the salute of the guard, without appearing to have seen it; and so went his way.

It was about this time that Napoleon first set up

affectations; and what he, no doubt, considered to be imposing manners. They answered very well.

"Ah! he's a kind of Daridolle in his way," said Serjeant Charpentier, as he returned to his cards, and prepared to cheat the corporal in continuation: "we shall see how he'll lead us; and whether he'll be able to fill our miserable empty bags of stomachs. It's your turn to deal, corporal. *Fais vîte, lambin que tu est!*"

It was not long before the army marched for Italy, in search of food, and death or glory.

Napoleon's plan was not to reach Italy by passing over the Alps: he turned them at their southern end; keeping as close as he could to the shore, where the land is most level.

I trust my readers will not imagine that a dry account of Napoleon's campaigns is here to follow. *Story-books* have nothing to do with history, properly so called; and none shall enter here, except little snatches in which our serjeants were concerned.

As a Paddy would say; "Napoleon crossed the Alps by turning them." Before doing so, however, he reviewed his lean, tattered army; and made his first address to his soldiers. The applause that followed bore witness to the tact, skill, and clap-trap, which the great commander knew so well how to use.

"*Quel acteur que ça ferait !*" cried Antoine, after he had shouted himself hoarse.

This young serjeant entered Italy with holes at his elbows, and his toes appearing through his shoes : as classic toes were in the habit of doing through cothurnæ. He was, however, not worse off than his comrades ; his spirits were at the highest pitch : epaulettes and honours seeming to hover in the air to lead him on.

Arsène took matters more coolly ; though active service had for some time past been ardently wished for by him. He marched doggedly on ; not seeming to heed tire, hunger, nor any of the little roughnesses of campaigning.

The French once in Italy, the Austrians endeavoured to prevent Napoleon reaching Genoa ; he being in the Genoese dominions. This endeavour on their part led to the battle of Monte Notte, the first action in which our Normans took part.

The day before this battle a grand affair took place at the redoubts of Monte Legino, where fifteen hundred men, under Colonel Rampon, kept the centre of the Austrian army at bay till evening ; the colonel having made his men swear to die rather than give up the post.

They held it well ; and the next day, fresh troops coming up, Napoleon's first victory was gained.

On going into action, Serjeant Charpentier did not feel that ardour which he had expected would have fired him. On the contrary, he felt a chill sensation, and was not much enlivened by the whizzing of passing balls, nor by the sudden dropping of several men near him ; neither by the sounds, half groan, half shriek, uttered by some of those who fell.

However, he determined to keep his own counsel as to his feelings ; opining that, probably many of his comrades, who were looking so fierce and warlike, might be just as uneasy as he was.

By degrees he became excited by the din of firing, the smell of powder, and the sight of blood.

He forgot all fear for his own safety ; he mightily enjoyed a charge, the drummers rattling the "*pas de charge*," as they sped along with the regiment ; he shouted "*vive la république*" louder and more heartily than any man present ; quite intoxicated by all that was passing around him : that is, by all that he could see ; which was not much at a time, owing to the clouds of smoke that covered the field.

In due time the Austrians beat a retreat before

the famished, valiant Frenchmen; who took two thousand prisoners, beside colours and guns. There were moreover a thousand brave Austrians lying dead and stark at Monte Notte.

Charpentier felt quite cast down when the fight was done; he only lived for another battle: meanwhile, however, he made the best of his time; supplied himself with a shirt and a good pair of shoes from among the slain; besides picking up a little money from the dead men's pockets. The modes of the republican army were somewhat brigand-like, before Napoleon reduced them to something more like order.

At first, the sight of so many bodies lying as they fell, the faces of many among them wearing an expression of horror and agony, struck Antoine's soul with a little awe. He soon, however, shook off this feeling, and the corpses were to him no more than the bodies of so many head of cattle.

They soon disappeared beneath the earth, which rose in a mound above them.

As Napoleon on first entering Italy had not wherewith to subsist his troops, they were, of necessity, forced either to starve or to plunder; therefore, marauding became the order of the day: a pursuit in which Antoine highly distinguished himself. He

seemed to have an instinct, which others had not, for turning out all kinds of provisions, hidden by the people of the country, to save them if possible from the cocked-hatted locusts spread over the face of the earth. Charpentier would ferret them out, and carry them off, with a polite bow and a fine speech, to the infinite amusement of his comrades.

He had escaped wounds and death in his first battle; leaving the field without so much as a scratch; although his face was greatly disfigured by perspiration and powder.

Arsène had not been so fortunate. Monte Notte was destined to be the first and last battle in which he was to take part. Towards the close of the action a musket ball struck his right hand, shattering his middle finger, and carrying away the first joint of his fore-finger; so putting a stop to Serjeant Potier's fighting that day and for ever.

He went to the rear, carrying his musket over his left shoulder; pale and faint as the blood streamed from his wound.

On arriving among the surgeons, Arsène sat himself down on a knapsack till some one should be at leisure to attend him; the sight of wounded and dying men, amputations and ball extracting, filling his pitying soul with compassion for the poor fellows

about him; making his shattered hand to appear as a thing of nought, compared with what he beheld on every side. Some of the men bore their sufferings like men; whilst others groaned and even shrieked like women; some again swore and blasphemed; and others laughed with a bravadoing air, in the midst of their pain.

"*Voyons! qu'as tu, mon brave?*" inquired a young surgeon stepping up to Arsène; a surgeon, who had just relieved a tall grenadier of a herculean, but broken leg.

Potier exhibited his hand, and told his story.

The young doctor looked carelessly at the wound; then beckoning to an assistant, he said to Arsène; "*Facile comme bonjour, mon cher; ce sera fait dans un crac!*"

"What?" asked the serjeant.

"You must lose your fingers to preserve your life; that's all."

"Oh! can't you dress them, and see if it is not possible to save them?"

"Bah! save them yourself if you like, and I will continue my rounds. Come, *sois grenadier:* everything's ready, and I can't wait. I'll have your fingers off like lightning; and then you may go home

to your sweetheart, for you'll never be able to fire another shot."

The young surgeon who addressed Potier had sworn to become the greatest operator of the age, and to make Europe ring with his name. He looked on battle fields as vast schools of surgery, open for his instruction. He practised on the stripped bodies of the killed, as well as on the bleeding bodies of the wounded. Let there be the smallest opening for an operation, an operation he would have: he could not resist the opportunity of gaining further skill. His mind was as sharp, and his heart was as hard as his knives; his industry and perseverance were immense; his hand was light as a feather and steady as a rock. What his fame might have become it is hard to say. A spent ball at Aboukir stopped his career, and his life, at a bound; and saved many a limb from falling beneath his greedy, skilful knife.

Arsène stood but a small chance in the clutches of this determined young medical officer. The poor fellow's fingers were off "*dans un crac*" according to the surgeon's promise; the patient, faint and livid, laid himself down beneath a wall; and resting his giddy, throbbing head on his *peau-de-veau*, fell off into a deep and heavy sleep; in spite of the noise of

firing, groans, swearing, talking, and shouting that filled the troubled air.

The French army, tattered and lean as it was, marched from victory to victory, under its beloved General. Those at Millesimo, Dego, Mondovi, &c., followed that of Monte Notte. Murat was sent to Paris with twenty-one stand of colours; whereby the Parisians were thrown into ecstasies of delight, and plunged into uproarious excitement.

It was decreed "*que l'armée a bien mérité de la patrie;*" and this was the fifth time during one month that the same decree had gone forth.

Maître Charpentier's newspaper bore all this glorious news to Antoine's home; spreading a gentle pride, mingled with dread, through the bosom of faithful Nanette.

Anon came the brilliant affair at Lodi; when Napoleon, having despatched cavalry out of sight of the enemy to ford the river Adda and charge the Austrians in flank, sent his three thousand grenadiers thundering over the bridge. These soldiers had to face the fire of thirty guns; which swept the bridge, and cut them off wholesale. They began to falter on seeing the manner in which the grape-shot used their column. It was but for a moment. Four generals, to wit, Bonaparte, Lannes, l'Allemand and Berthier,

ran to the head; and led the encouraged column over the bridge, to the very mouth of the blazing guns. It was Lannes who first reached them, but little, light Bonaparte came in second; and the enemies' infantry being too far off to come up in time to the support of the artillery, the guns were taken; the artillery men killed; and before long the whole Austrian army fled.

It was in consequence of his conduct at the bridge of Lodi, that Napoleon was, by his men, first called "*le petit caporal;*" a title by which he is nearly as well known as by that of Emperor.

At Lodi as at Monte Notte, Serjeant Charpentier was respected by balls, bayonettes, and sabres; coming out of battle without having lost one drop of blood. He watched with greedy eyes the losses of his gallant regiment; so anxious was he for promotion; somewhat after the manner of a very old Vice-Admiral, who was wont, with shaking hand, to put a large black cross before the names of all those above him who went to their graves; making the pages of the Navy List to look like a French church-yard in a snow-storm; and never seeming to think it possible that *he* might be the very next for promotion, albeit, not the promotion he was so intent upon. So it was with Charpentier; who would have laughed at any

one who should have supposed it possible that he should be slain in battle, before an officer's epaulettes graced his broad shoulders; or even after they had done so.

It was on the 14th of May, 1796, that Napoleon first entered Milan. He rode beneath a triumphal arch, to the shouting and hurraing of the Milanese; who soon however changed their note, when the man they thus shouted and hurraed for put them under a tremendous contribution for the benefit of the French troops: neither could they quite make out how the great chief who promised them freedom from despots, and perfect liberty, should treat them so tyrannically.

Napoleon himself said how difficult it was to persuade people that you were acting entirely for their good, and in a friendly manner; whilst at the same time you were stripping them of all they had, and taking it for your own use.

This friendly behaviour on the part of Napoleon did cause an insurrection or so; soon put down, however, by French promptitude and decision.

When once Bonaparte was in possession of supplies he set his army in order, and put a stop to marauding: greatly to Serjeant Charpentier's disgust, as well as that of many others, who, like Charpentier,

had promised themselves pretty pickings in the great towns they were to conquer, and in the fine churches which were, as they supposed, to have been at their disposal.

However, they were doomed to disappointment; as one of the republican general's first acts was to protect the religion, churches, and priests of the countries he had conquered: greatly to the horror of the Directory at home, who little dreamt what an anti-republican heart Napoleon's was; neither what a wolf in sheep's clothing they had placed at the head of the army of Italy.

Arcola was a fortunate fight for Serjeant Charpentier, and the 15th of November 1796, on which it took place, became one of the memorable dates of his life. On that bloody day the bridge of Arcola was swept, as that of Lodi had been, by Austrian guns. Charpentier's regiment was there present with others, exposed to the fire of the roaring, murderous cannon. It was hard work, and anything but play; even the grenadiers, led by Augereau, commander of the division that occupied the bridge, could not face the fiery storm before them. As they wavered and stopt, Napoleon sprang forward to the head of the column; took their colours; and, as though he minded the showers of Austrian balls as

little as a sharp shower of hail, planted the flag on the bridge of Arcola. This conduct of "*le petit caporal*" encouraged his troops once more to advance, and to do their best; but the Austrian General Alvinzi sending up reinforcements, the Germans fought with such ardour that the French were obliged to give way.

Napoleon's soldiers seized him; some by the hair, some by the arms and clothes; dragging him off in their retreat. As they went, a number of them fell from the bridge into the morass beneath it, carrying the poor "little corporal" with them in their fall. There was the future Emperor of France in a marsh up to his very middle; a good mark for the enemy; and with some of his foes between him and his own people! Lannes and Muiron threw themselves into the marsh, and reached their commander; as they did so a ball flew rolling through the smoky air: a ball that would have put an end to all Napoleon's great deeds, but for Muiron; who, having placed himself as a defence between Bonaparte and his foes, received the ruthless bullet, and died, still covering his chief with his body till he fell.

Bonaparte was not out of danger till some of the troops (Charpentier was among them) dashed into the morass, shouting "*sauver le général:*" and by hard

fighting carried him off; having waded up to their waists, and taken the enemy in the rear.

No sooner was brave little Bonaparte safe, than he again rushed over the bridge; and Arcola was finally taken.

Death seemed in this engagement to have done his best, by picking off all obstacles to Serjeant Charpentier's promotion, who found himself, after Arcola, the happy possessor of the long looked for grade of *sous-lieutenant!* Antoine Charpentier, son of the village schoolmaster at St. Eloy, was an officer!

The new *sous-lieutenant's* heart was full of joy; but his vanity was not fully satisfied without the costume and *contre-épaulette*, proper to his position in life. These were supplied by two of the unfortunate *sous-lieutenants* of his regiment, who had fallen at Arcola; their successor taking from each that which he deemed best worth having.

The pic-nic uniform thus obtained was regulation, though sadly tarnished and faded.

Farewell to musket, bayonette, and briquet! to black gaiters, yellow-worsted epaulettes, and serjeant's chevrons! Charpentier now appeared in silver-laced coat, with silver *contre-épaulette*, and the light, taper sword of an officer. How he rejoiced in his top-boots with the pointed toes; and in his cock-

ed hat with the silver loop, and the feather: though, to be sure, the boots were more than half worn out, and the hat was rusty and weather-beaten.

Shortly after Charpentier's promotion, Napoleon returned to Milan; and the army was indulged with a rest: welcome to no one more than to Antoine; who, in spite of his warlike taste, began to long for a little pleasure. This he got at Milan, where his regiment was quartered; being, moreover, fitted out with a new uniform, about the set of which the *sous-lieutenant* was extremely fidgetty and particular.

It is not to be supposed that the splendid Cathedral at Milan, standing out in the dazzling whiteness of marble against the deep blue sky, was much noticed or appreciated by Charpentier. He sauntered through it, and pronounced it to be all very well for those *qui donnent dans la calotte;* and he viewed all other works of art in that ancient town with the same indifference: wondering much that the Commander-in-chief should levy contributions of pictures to be sent to Paris, when the colours carried there from time to time were so much more military; and quite trophies enough, being won in hard fights, without the addition of old paintings of monks and saints.

"*C'est un fameux original que nôtre général*" usually wound up his reflections.

The Corso at high tide, together with the public gardens, were Charpentier's favourite resorts. There he eyed handsome and noble ladies, with a kind of respectfully obtrusive familiarity : he was an officer. There were some among them on whom his good looks were not without effect; though his real success was among the town's people of the good city of Milan.

Charpentier haunted the opera, parading an opera-glass, with great airs and graces ; at the same time he did not disdain to stand and enjoy Punch and the fantoccini on the Piazza del Duomo ; or to attempt to enter into little light flirtations with handsome Lombard country-women, whose jet black hair in thick, sumptuous plaits, was ornamented by an aureol of long silver pins disposed like the feathers of the spread tail of a peacock. Here, with few exceptions, he failed. The French army had been guilty of such savage cruelty when first they entered Italy, that the heart of the country people never thoroughly warmed towards them, or confided in them.

Charpentier passed a great deal of his time in gambling ; in short, he took a good plunge into, and a long swim in the sea of pleasure : fleshly pleasure, tainting and corrupting ; but which will endure to destroy the souls of men whilst this world lasts : Sa-

tan rejoicing to see them fall into his traps, daintily and coarsely baited to suit all appetites.

Charpentier's vanity often led him through a certain street, wherein was situated the shop of a looking-glass maker; before which he would stand, in as careless a manner as his feelings would allow, for the sole purpose of viewing himself, at full length, in an immense glass placed at the back of the shop.

Greatly did he approve of the reflection he there beheld; and much did he wonder that all the women in the world were not going mad and committing suicide on his account.

The carelessness of his air was not so well put on, as not to be seen through at a glance by a little Milanese *gamin*, whose costume consisted solely of a very coarse canvass shirt, showing his berry-brown breast, and a pair of linsey-woolsey breeches, hanging open at the knees.

His shaggy black hair served him for a cap; and the horny soles of his feet did as well as shoes. His sparkling eyes were full of fun and malice as he grinned, showing his white, even teeth: teeth that had never needed a brush, and cried out, in a mocking, aggravating voice:—

"*Quanto è carino, quanto è bellino, quel signor*

ffiuziale. Oimè quelle povere ragazze! ahi! poverine!"

Charpentier, enraged at this address, aimed a blow at the *gamin;* but the *gamin* with a light bound avoided it; whilst the officer, losing his balance, ran a step or two forward, plunging head foremost against the fat abdomen of a large old man, and nearly taking his breath away by the butt he gave him. The officer's laced hat pitched into the muddy kennel that ran in the middle of the street; whilst he loudly swore and raved; the boy calling out in a shrill and impish falsetto, as he hopped along backwards towards the first turning:—"*A rivederla uffiziale dello specchio; a rivederla uffiziale del diavolo; ladro francese, schiavo di Buonaparte, le faccio un bell'inchino*"—and so, making a bow, the creature disappeared round the corner; whilst Charpentier shook his cane at him, amidst a volley of his most rattling and forcible oaths.

Whilst her lover was fighting for France, and disporting himself in conquered lands, Nanette was steadily leading her frugal and industrious life at home.

Harivel found that she was to be trusted in all things above the rest of his servants; wherefore to Nanette was committed the task of riding, once a week, to Rouen market: the farmer's wife, not

being over robust, feeling but too glad to have a trustworthy person to take that journey for her.

Nanette was mounted on a strong nag. Her saddle was like the hind part of a pillion: and around it hung dead poultry, as well as fruit, and live poultry in baskets. She was wont to start at early dawn, not returning till evening; never failing to bring back some little gift for her mother, besides spending a few sous on the poor. It was more especially to soldiers begging their way home from the army, that the sous were given; they, in return, recounting to Nanette all they knew about the movements of the troops in Italy: it being on Italy that all the poor Norman country-girl's interest was fixed.

As she was slowly jogging home from market, on a fine evening in the beginning of June, looking, as she went, on the glowing sky of evening; thinking on Antoine; and wondering what kind of country Italy could possibly be; Nanette overtook a tall, bare-footed soldier, limping painfully along, with stooping gait and slow.

His gaiters were torn and covered with dust; a ragged blouse served him instead of a coat; a blue handkerchief was tied about his head; his beard was long; and he carried his calf-skin knapsack on a

stick over his shoulder; one of the straps being broken. His short sword was the only soldier-like thing about him.

As Nanette drew near, she searched in her deep pocket; at the bottom of which she found a two-sous piece for the soldier. This she gave with some gentle words of pity; asking at the same time if he was hungry.

"*Mon dieu, oui,*" was the answer, in a hollow voice.

Nanette again put her hand into the deep pocket, pulling forth a comely *brioche* intended for her mother; but which she now transferred to the limping soldier.

"*Merci,*" he said, without raising his eyes, as he began to devour the *brioche;* keeping up the while with Fripon, Nanette's steed.

"Where do you come from?" inquired Nanette, when the *brioche* had disappeared.

"From Italy."

"Ah! then perhaps you know the——'*ème de ligne,*'" cried Nanette; clasping her hands without being aware that she did so.

"I know it well."

"Did you ever serve with it?"

"Serve *with* it? I served *in* it!"

"Ah! then perhaps you know two friends of ours, two young men from our village; soldiers in that regiment!"

"What are their names?"

"Arsène Potier," replied Nanette, clearly and distinctly; then added with a little hesitation, "and Antoine Charpentier."

"I know them very well," returned the soldier, turning away his head; and saying nothing further.

After a pause, Nanette asked timidly if the soldier could give her any news of them.

"Charpentier," he said, "is the soul of his company; never discouraged; as brave as a lion; and *must* be an officer before long. As for the other, he was wounded at Monte Notte——"

"Wounded? oh! poor Arsène—wounded?" cried Nanette, suddenly stopping Fripon. "Was he much hurt?"

"I believe that he lost part of his hand. The regiment soon missed him when the wounded were left behind."

"How cruel to leave poor wounded men!"

"General Bonaparte's movements were so rapid, he could take nothing superfluous with him. There was no baggage but what the men carried on their backs."

"Poor Arsène! He was *so* good and kind. We were children together. Oh! I hope he will come home safely. I shall pray for him night and morning."

"*Merci, mam'selle Nanette, merci!*" cried the soldier, in choking tones, taking Nanette's hand; then, turning away, he wept bitterly.

Nanette sprang off her horse.

"Arsène," she cried, going up to the soldier, "is it you? I did not know you. I am so glad you have got home safely: but it is not true you have lost part of your hand, is it?"

Poor Potier only answered by drawing his mutilated hand from his breast; then, quickly replacing it, he said, "I shall never handle a musket again!"

"How you must have suffered, poor Arsène!"

"I did. If the village had been two days' march further, I should never have reached it; so weak and faint am I."

Potier's looks bore witness to the truth of what he said. He was cadaverous in appearance; stooping as though too feeble to support his weight; his sunken eyes were glazed and blood-shot; his long locks added to the wildness of his air.

"My toilette is not much in my favour," he said, with a faint smile; "rest and a razor may perhaps improve me."

He then asked after his father and mother; and after politely helping Nanette to remount Fripon, who was *improving the opportunity* by diligently grazing, he took a well-known path across the meadows: a path that led to his home without taking him through the village.

He turned from time to time to look on Nanette, as she went her way amidst a slight cloud of dust, raised by Fripon's large wide hoofs.

When she disappeared from his view, he looked at his unsightly hand, shook his head, sighed, and said:

"She never *can* love me with *that*, come what will! Impossible! She will pity me, her heart is so kind; but she never can go beyond that, now. Well! patience—life is short, and worms of the earth must not expect to have every pleasure they fix their minds on. It is a good thing I did not lose my arm or my leg. As it is, I can manage to work at my old trade; and hard work is a fine remedy for a sick heart."

As Potier drew near his home he heard the pleasant sound of the mill. The setting sun cast a red light on the little winding river, into which the martens dipped, as they skimmed about after insects in the cool of evening.

The reeds growing beside the water were calmly

reflected on the surface; cows were dotted about the meadow beyond; some grazing, others lying down, sedately chewing the cud, as though they reviewed meek and pleasant fancies in their minds.

Potier could hear the voices of the village children as they played, laughing and calling to each other. He saw the gilt cock, perched on the steeple cross, shining red beneath the setting sun, and he remembered how, as a boy, he had longed to climb up to it.

He stopped for an instant to look about him. The long, fresh grass was cooling to his tired, bruised feet; the sight of home and the cool of evening soothing to his heart.

"Thank Heaven for all things," he said; "I trust never to leave this spot again. Here I hope to grow old, and here I hope to die!"

Arsène limped on to the mill. The house-dog flew barking towards him; but when he called it by name it ceased barking, sniffed him, then ran to and fro, wagging its tail, sneezing, and showing every symptom of delight at again beholding its beloved master.

Old Potier came out of the mill on hearing the dog bark. He shaded his eyes from the red rays of the sun, peered at Potier without knowing him, and then said;

"Ah! you have served, I see; and a nice example war has made of you. Come in and rest a little. We can give you a supper and a bed; my poor Arsène's bed: he is serving in Italy. I often tremble when I think of him; but who knows but what he may return an officer! Come in here, and drink a glass of cider; as soon as I've done my work, we'll go into the house to supper. I shan't be long."

Arsène followed his father into the mill without saying a word, and sat himself down on a heap of empty sacks, not knowing how to announce to the old miller that the miserable creature before him was his son.

The inside of the mill was lighted up by the crimson sunbeams that shone in through the door-way, causing everything to look ruddy and bright; except dark corners that looked darker than ever, contrasted with the brightness about them.

The old man poured out two glasses of cider, one of which he handed to his son, with whom he proceeded to *trinquer*, saying: "To the health of our brave army!" Arsène thanked him, and swallowing the cool, refreshing cider, he let himself fall at full length on the piled up sacks; where, worn out and weary, he soon lost consciousness in a sound sleep.

From this he was, in due time, aroused by the mil-

ler; who, shaking him by the arm, called out in a loud voice to his wife:

"*Oui, not' femme; on y va!*"

Old Potier, informing his son that supper was ready, followed him out of the mill, locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket.

"Here, *not' femme*," he said, as he stept into the house; "I have brought you a soldier to supper. Maybe he can tell us something of the '*—ème*,' when he has eaten, drank, and rested a little. Marie can make up Arsène's bed for him."

The miller's wife looked hard at the soldier; then, taking up the candle, she held it to his face. Arsène's eyes met her's; the candle was returned to its place; and the old woman and the serjeant were locked in each other's arms.

"*Diable!*" cried the miller, scratching his white head.

"*Not' homme*, don't you see, it's Arsène? I knew him, in spite of his long beard and the dust that covers him!"

"That's lucky, for I thought you were mad!" returned old Potier, embracing his son; the two old people both crying for joy at his unexpected return.

As for Arsène, he was so exhausted and starved,

that he had scarcely strength to answer all the questions put to him by his father and mother.

How they lamented over the loss of his fingers! and yet they rejoiced; as it was that which had, perhaps, saved him from death in battle; and sent him home without farther harm, no more to leave them.

Arsène's heart was full of gratitude to Heaven, as he laid him down in his own bed, far from strife and turmoil! His mother had prepared a *bouillon*, which she administered to him after he had lain down; then kissing him, as she used to do in his days of childhood, she left him to his repose.

The next day Arsène remained in bed, sleeping nearly the whole time; his mother ever and anon, coming in to bring him strengthening food, or to watch him as he lay asleep; sighing at his worn and wasted looks, and at the sad expression of his thin face; whilst she wept silently on beholding his maimed hand, thinking how much he must have suffered.

It was three whole days before Arsène left his bed. He then seated himself in the shade before the door, arrayed in his holiday suit of other days; which his mother had carefully preserved, and often looked at with tender thoughts, wishing for her lost son back again.

Maître Charpentier, and all those who had sons in the army, flocked round him to ask after their soldier relatives; supposing, in the innocence of their hearts, that Arsène must have served with every one of them, and would know all about them.

He had to recount to every new comer the history of the battle in which his hand was shattered; how he had felt during his operation; as well as the particulars of his journey home.

"The army," he said, "was required to move so rapidly in order to execute General Bonaparte's designs, that all useless incumbrance was left behind. We wounded were looked upon as useless, and left to our fate.

"We did not complain, as it was for the good of France; but we suffered a great deal. I had got my discharge; so I went my way with three sous in my pocket, and a bit of chesnut bread in my knapsack. There were some other discharged soldiers with me; but after we had recrossed the frontier they fell off, one by one, to return to their homes; so that at length the only one that remained was a young man of nineteen, in so exhausted a condition that I was forced to support him from time to time as we walked; besides waiting whilst the poor boy rested by the way-side. This caused some delay on the road;

but I could not leave him to his fate ; he had singled me out at first starting, and seemed to cling to me as his only hope. He wore the uniform of a lieutenant of light-infantry, and had been disabled by a shot which had struck his knee and crippled him for life.

"I did what I could for him ; such as getting leave for him to travel in the carts we met on the road, and feeding him as well as I could : which was very badly after all, as we lived by begging, having no supplies of our own. My young companion spoke very little ; and became more and more feeble, wasting away from day to day. At length it became quite evident to me that he was dying ; he, himself, was aware that such was the case, but seemed to feel no horror of death, of which he spoke calmly, and in few words.

"I carried him in my arms to a little village-inn, and laid him on a truckle-bed, the only one disengaged : whilst the landlady, who had a brother with the army, ran to fetch a doctor. 'It is of no use,' said the young man, quietly, 'I shall be dead before he comes. I wish every one to leave the room but you, Potier.' His wish being obeyed, he raised himself up ; whilst I wiped the cold sweat from his face. His voice was feeble and hard to hear, but I collected every one of his words. He thanked me for what

he was pleased to call my goodness to him ; begging me to promise that when he should be no more, I would see that he was buried in his uniform, and that no one should touch him, except to put him in the earth ; which was to be done without coffin. 'I will conceal nothing from you, my friend,' he added, feebly. 'I am a woman ; and I entered the army to follow my lover. He fell at Monte Notte ; I am alone in the world, and desolate : there is no one to grieve for me ; unless you shed a tear over my misfortunes.' The poor young woman's agony had begun. I promised to do all she wished, and she pressed my hand between hers, which were already cold and clammy. After a time she said she could not see, and faintly asked for a light. Just then the doctor arrived ; looked at her, said : '*Pauvre garçon ;*' added that he was very young to die, and so departed. Soon after, my poor companion ceased to exist, after a short struggle. I watched beside the body throughout the night, and the next day saw her buried according to her wish. There was nothing in her pockets to point out who she was : she passed away without leaving a trace behind her.

"I went on my journey with a sad heart ; my health was becoming weaker every day ; and there were so many military beggars that I was sometimes

a whole day without eating. In large towns I was worse off than in the villages; the inhabitants of which were far more charitable than the town's-people. Sometimes a farmer would allow me to sleep in his barn; that recruited me a little: however, I one night lost my coat by so doing. Another soldier-beggar was quartered there with me; he had belonged to a cavalry regiment, but the only part of his uniform remaining was his cap, and the over-alls lined with leather, such as the cavalry wear. We shared our bread and a few onions; I finding the bread and he the onions; which he confided to me he had taken out of a garden during the night; adding, 'One must do a little marauding here, as well as with the army!' He laughed at the idea, which I must confess did not please me. I slept very heavily among the straw; when I awoke, my coat was gone, and I found a paper beside me, on which was pricked with a pin: 'Thank you. I wish you a good journey.' How he contrived to strip me without waking me, I cannot make out. The rest of my journey furnished no adventures: but I was so weakened, sickly, and worn down, that I could not have travelled many days longer; although home, my parents, and all my old friends were at the journey's end."

It was not very long before Arsène regained his

health and strength. A visit to his sister, some years older than himself and married near Caen, put the finishing stroke to his recovery; enabling him once again to work with his father in the mill, as he had done before his three years' military service began.

Daridolle had felt somewhat uneasy on hearing of Potier's return; but he was comforted on finding that the retired soldier's hand was not in pristine vigour.

"Ah! ah! you miller, you can't throw citizens over hedges or toss them in blankets now, with your chicken's claw!" he cried one day on meeting the victim of his malice. Being on horseback he was not afraid of waxing thus witty.

"Very true," replied Potier, "but my left arm is strong enough to hold a little cat under water, and drown it!"

Daridolle never tried his wit on the miller again.

Nanette had not heard from her lover since his regiment left Nice for the Italian campaign; in consequence of which Flandrin had become a sinecurist, and Nanette somewhat uneasy: although Arsène rather reassured her, by telling her how impossible it was for a soldier to write in Antoine's situation; and that she would, no doubt, have a letter if the army went into cantonments.

Potier's heart always darkened on hearing Charpentier's name: he had so ill an opinion of him; and felt so grieved that Nanette should be wasting her love on such a careless, selfish rake, as her old playfellow had become. Still these feelings did not prevent him from doing all in his power to chase away the uneasy dread by which she was haunted.

At length the long expected letter arrived, and Nanette was happy. It was dated from Milan, gave a flourishing and exaggerated account of the several engagements Charpentier had been in; announcing that his valour had been the means of promoting him to the grade of officer. This letter of course said nothing about his little diversions at Milan: neither did it relate how he was in the habit of gambling at an *estaminet* set up by a Frenchman, and frequented by the lower ranks of officers, by second-rate musicians and artists, as well as by actors, who were more often hissed than applauded. The letter did not inform Nanette that Antoine in an evil hour cheated Ippolito Beccheroni; a person whose vocation it was to "*come on*" at a small theatre, as Roman generals, captains of tyrants' guards, second in command of troops of brigands, and any little part requiring a tall figure, a loud voice, and a long stride. Beccheroni discovered the French officer's fraudulent ways, and

insisted upon having his losses back again. The French officer holding tight by his gains, the actor dived into his own pocket, bringing forth a huge clasp-knife, which served him both for eating and fighting, as the case might be.

Ippolito Beccheroni opened the knife, and made a dash at Charpentier's breast; he, however, dodged the blow, but received the broad blade in the fleshy part of the arm. The police was loudly called for; tables were knocked over, and the estaminet was in an uproar. Beccheroni was duly handed off; Charpentier twirled his moustache, and talked loudly of his wounded honour: but he said nothing of all this to Nanette.

Maître Charpentier had received the *ditto* to this letter, the love passages excepted: great was the excitement spread by it in St. Eloy, the schoolmaster trotting about to read it to every one; and every one taking it as a personal compliment that an inhabitant of their village, known to them all, should be actually wearing an officer's uniform.

Charpentier begged to be informed if anything had been heard of Serjeant Potier; adding that, for his part, he firmly believed that he had fallen at Monte Notte.

It was many months before Nanette again heard

from the *sous-lieutenant;* but she followed the movements of the army by means of Maître Charpentier's paper, as well as on a map of Italy; the old schoolmaster pointing out to her, with a pen, the different parts of the country occupied by the French troops, and the places where the different battles had been fought.

It was not till after the passage of the river Tagliamento, which took place on the 16th of March, 1797, that Nanette again heard from Charpentier. The letter contained the news of his promotion to the grade of lieutenant in his old regiment; also announcing that nothing on earth could stand before General Bonaparte and the French army; and that shortly before the last action, Augereau had been sent to Paris with sixty stand of colours. "*Nous sommes invincibles!*" wrote the lieutenant; adding that he had had the honour of bleeding for "*la patrie;*" and that his forehead would for ever bear the mark of the Austrian sabre that shed his blood.

The news of this wound chilled Nanette's spirits for a time; but she would not suffer herself to be cast down; continuing to pray for worthless Antoine, and to hope for his return. Sometimes she would be doubtful for a space; reflecting that a farm-servant was far beneath a handsome officer, who had bled for his coun-

try, and done such great deeds as the lieutenant represented himself to have achieved. But then, when she read over his letters from the first to the last, and saw that every one was more tender than its predecessor, her heart would be calmed; little wotting that the increased tenderness of Charpentier's epistles proceeded from his growing knowledge of plays, romances, and love poetry. This, however, she knew full well; that if Antoine became faithless, the peace of her life would be gone for ever.

Matters being settled in Italy, restless Bonaparte next turned his mighty soul towards Egypt and the East; working day and night to complete his preparations, with a view to a further conquest and further glory.

The vast host he was to command was in due time assembled, and ready to sail. How many French bones were to lie beneath the sands of Egypt! How many soldiers were already sleeping the sleep of ages beneath Italian earth!

A portion of the army of Italy, picked men, was to form a part of that Egypt.

The regiment to which Lieutenant Charpentier belonged proceeded to Toulon to join the expedition; others embarked at Civita Vecchia.

Charpentier, dreaming promotion and glory, was

impatient to set his foot on the theatre of his new exploits; meanwhile killing time in pleasure at Toulon.

The day of embarcation was announced; the army looked fierce and full of expectation; the port was filled with the shipping that was to carry them from France.

The lieutenant duly announced to his father and his *fiancée*, that in four days' time he should be on the bosom of the deep, sailing to crush the enemies of France, as they had been crushed on the plains of Lombardy.

The letter to Nanette wound up by a copy of ardent farewell verses, redolent of love and anguish: taken, word for word, from a sentimental and well-thumbed *chansonnier;* but which Charpentier was pleased to pass off as his own. He likewise enclosed a lock of his hair, duly perfumed, which he entreated poor confiding Nanette to wear near her heart, if he should fall *beneath the Pyramids;* for the lieutenant had floating ideas of pyramids, mummies, *centaurs*, and *Turks*, as forming the main features of Egypt.

"*Voila qui fera son affaire!*" he said complacently, as he sealed his love-letter, and proceeded to carry it to the post.

Having deposited his epistle, our officer turned his

steps towards the public walk, one of his favourite resorts; as he was there in the habit of strolling up and down with brother-officers, imagining that he eclipsed them all by his superior mien and carriage.

Charpentier, as he paced to and fro, felt tired and heavy; a shiver from time to time passing over him, whilst the hot sun caused his eyes and head to ache.

To chase away these sensations, he bent his steps towards a house on the quay; decorated with a large board over the door, on which were painted a pyramid of three billiard balls beneath two cues crossed, and bearing in large letters the word "billiards."

The smell of pitch, and tar, and fish that assailed Charpentier on the quay, brought so faint a sickness over him, that he was glad to turn into the first café that presented itself, and to sit him down before a little marble table; on which flies were busily employed in feasting on particles of sugar visible only to themselves, whilst others buzzed about in swarms, or regaled themselves at the other tables. The lieutenant ordered a cup of strong "*café noir*" and a glass of Kirchwasser; then leant his elbows on the table, to the discomfiture of the flies, and rested his throbbing head on his hands.

He called to mind that he had not felt well for

some days ; swore that he would *not* be ill ; that he would *not* give in, and that it was all nothing.

A violin, clarionette, and French horn burst forth in a corner of the café, to the delight of the customers there assembled : who listened complacently, joining in with their voices ; whilst to Antoine this music turned the small close room into a Pandemonium.

The violin player was a wonderful performer ; he could make his fiddle say : "Fanchette ;" the name of the presiding goddess of the place ; besides being able to play upon it by putting it behind him, just as well as when it rested on his collar-bone.

These tricks drew forth a burst of applause, and a shower of sous ; whilst Charpentier was, by all that took place around him, wound up to a frenzy of irritability.

As he was paying his reckoning, a little debonnaire man stept pertly up to him, and challenged him to a game of dominoes.

"*Vas au diable, toi et tes dominos aussi !*" roared the lieutenant ; giving the little, smiling man a push that seated him flat on the floor.

"*Tiens !*" cried the astonished victim of Charpentier's irritable temper and coming sickness ; as the lieutenant shot like a thunderbolt from the café

again, to brave the hot sun, and the smell of pitch, and tar, and fish upon the quay.

Charpentier pleased himself in the supposition that he had a very bad cold; for which the proper remedies would be a good dinner and a visit to the theatre. He found, however, that at dinner he was only capable of deluging himself with wine; and that the heat and noise of the theatre were unbearable, in spite of the acting of the cleverest, and most beautiful comic actress from Paris.

He left two comrades in full enjoyment of the play; took two or three ices, and rushed home to bed; overjoyed to shut out noise and light, which seemed to hurt his very brain. On the following morning the lieutenant got up, and forthwith went to bed again: the surgeon was sent for, and quickly pronounced upon the case.

"There will be no Egypt for you, *mon cher*," he said.

"No Egypt! Why not? I shall be well by the day of embarcation."

"You will embark and sail over the Styx, more likely, if you don't take care. You are like Basilio in the Barber of Seville: you have the scarlet fever, and I must see to getting you off to the hospital; as

a fresh corps are to march in here the day we leave. Come, Basilio, get up: you'll have plenty of bed where you're going."

The doctor, who, like too many of the republican army surgeons, was hard-hearted and rattling, saw Charpentier get up and dress himself; the process being accompanied by much grumbling and swearing on the part of the patient; together with bantering and laughing on that of the surgeon.

The lieutenant was duly carried off to the hospital by a fatigue party, and there stretched out in bed, to become worse and worse every hour.

Charpentier's breathing became a *râle;* he was sucked by leeches, bled, blistered, and violently treated; besides which, the expedition sailed without him.

Fever got entire possession of him, filling his brain with strange images. Sometimes he thought he beheld Renaud, the hussar trumpeter, killed years before in his first duel (he had had many since), and that the hussar incessantly sprang from the ground, to fall heavily on his face; whilst Charpentier tried to count how many times he did so, never being able to get beyond three. Then he would think he saw a large, dark, shadowy figure sitting on the foot of his bed, with shining eyes immovably fixed on his,

whose look he could not escape. Distant music sounded in his ears for hours, of which he tried in vain to catch the air. He imagined, too, that he beheld a very small and very far-distant light shining through thick darkness; and that, in order to reach this, he was struggling through a gigantic bale of suffocating wool.

If the phantasms of all the sick men in the ward where Charpentier lay, could by some Fuseli have been shown to the eye, what a horrible picture it would have made.

The lieutenant was neither meek nor patient in sickness; added to which, his ravings were anything but edifying.

The crisis being past, Charpentier recovered his senses, and with them all the feelings of pain and weakness that fever brings.

He had a faint recollection of being told that he was like Basilio; of having had on leeches, whilst a blazing candle shone full in his eyes; likewise of having picked at his coverlet, repeating to himself that that was a sign of death, and vainly trying to restrain his fingers.

Although his horrid visions had left him by day, in the silence of night—a silence only broken by moans—the dark, shadowy figure never failed to ap-

pear on the foot of his bed, staring on him until he fell into his restless sleep.

The wall was to the right of Charpentier; to his left was a bed tenanted by a ghastly-looking horse-grenadier, with a sick man's beard: a being who had struggled hard with fever beyond the term fixed upon by the doctors for his demise. The grenadier had required men to hold him, and ropes to tie him; he had raved and he had fought; but, at length, after a horrible struggle, he lay dead, with staring eyes, upon his low bed.

Charpentier had seen hundreds of men die in battle; but then he was well, strong, and excited; wherefore that wholesale death took no effect upon him. Now that he was sick, feeble, and cast down, he was shaken by the sight of the long agony and ghastly death of the grenadier. The man had died towards midnight; a sheet was thrown over him, and he was left on his bed till morning.

The ward was lighted by a dim lamp, which cast dark shadows around. By its flickering light Charpentier could see the long, hard form of the grenadier, beneath the sheet that covered him; whilst mutterings, restless tossings, and feverish ravings from the sick men around smote his ears.

Charpentier thought on the three nights last past,

during which the man who was lying so still and stiff had fought and sworn like a maniac.

"What a strange thing death is!" he said to himself. Then his mind began to ponder over all the fine free-thinking doctrines he had thought it so grand to adopt, and to drop out with a careless air whenever a fitting opportunity presented itself. From these he wandered to the religion he had learnt in his childhood, and on which he had not dwelt for many a long day. The lieutenant was not at all in the habit of thinking: he would let ideas run through his mind at random, and so depart. The ideas which now possessed him would not depart: they kept haunting him, filling his soul with a vague dread and a kind of repentance; whilst he could neither sleep, nor take his eyes off the dead grenadier.

Duels, orgies, nights and days of depravity; images of bye-gone pleasures, seldom present to his light mind, now assailed him; something within him seeming to call out—"Thou hast led the life of an evil spirit. Thou wilt one day lie dead like unto the corpse beside thee!"

Charpentier began to tremble and to sweat, longing for day, and resolutely rolling over, with his back to the ghastly form of the soldier.

The image of Nanette now rose before him.

"Well! it was *her* fault and not mine. If she had married me I should not be here: *peste!* But then I should never have been a soldier!"

The sight of day-break, and the sound of living, moving beings, calmed Charpentier's spirits; he called himself a thousand fools for the ideas he had entertained during the night; welcoming back his free-thinking chimeras; and longing for health and pleasure, to restore his mind to what he called a healthy tone.

The tall wasted body of the horse-grenadier was removed for dissection; Charpentier breathing more freely, and composing himself to sleep when it was gone.

The surgeons on seeing the gigantic corpse, cried: —"*Enfin! c'est heureux; car tu t'es joliment fait attendre, chenapan.*"

The lieutenant, whenever the shades of night darkened the ward, was for a long time assailed by qualms, dread, and the uneasy upbraidings of conscience. These, however, all fled away like bats at morning light; yet they failed not to return at dark.

Charpentier drew no good from the whispers of his soul; he persevered in calling them sick man's phantasms; the remnants of the *bigotry* of childhood; ideas that had been forced upon him by a *calotin*, in

the days when the light of reason did not enlighten him: when he was a slave to superstition and folly.

"*Faut raisonner en philosophe, homme du monde!*" he would say, whilst this part of the earth was lighted up by the sun; but when it rolled away to darkness, he felt half inclined to say his prayers.

At length came the day when Charpentier was ordered out to taste the air.

Oh! weary day for a faint, feeble patient.

The lieutenant, lean and trembling, tottered down the broad staircase into the vast court of the hospital; where other convalescents in various stages were talking, walking, or sitting on the wide stone benches around the yard.

To Charpentier the sun seemed to shine with a certain spiteful dazzle; the dark blue, cloudless, Southern sky appeared to him to be higher than he had ever seen it; the lights and shades on the buildings looked preternaturally distinct and sharp; whilst he felt very small, his legs very heavy and powerless, and his swimming head so light, that he thought with a sickly smile, that it was more like a paper balloon than a head.

Lieutenant Charpentier's top-boots were not properly filled up by his shrunken legs; besides which his clothes hung about him like bags; whilst his

head having been shorn, his cocked hat surmounted a white cotton nightcap. He looked like anything but the *joli cœur*, who was wont airily to steal female hearts, and then to throw them away as nothing worth. Charpentier soon became acquainted with the other night-capped and spectral-looking promenaders about him ; and a great relief it was once more to talk worldly talk, and feel that he had distanced death : for this once at all events.

Visitors came on appointed days to see some of the patients, but the lieutenant had none. His regiment was clean gone ; as well as others in which he had acquaintances : his civilian friends all imagined that he was by that time in Egypt ; the great glory-field where the new crop of laurels grew.

"*A récommencer !*" quoth Charpentier, "old friends are gone, I must set up new ones."

No sooner said than done.

Antoine became the life of all the convalescent patients in the court ; parties of pleasure being by him already set on foot, against the happy time when they should, one and all, be out of the hospital.

The day came when the lieutenant quitted that abode of suffering, delirium, and groaning.

The surgeons told him, much to his chagrin, that

Egypt would be certain death to him; he was, therefore, forced to give up all idea of glory in that quarter.

"Never mind," he said, "the little corporal will be sure to find plenty of sport for us somewhere else; he has not done with us yet; and if we have our way we shall make a king of him before long, and send those long-winded *lawyers* to the right about!"

Charpentier took a room at a little inn on the quay. He could not bear to be in quiet, remote from life and bustle; not being yet quite free from nervous panics, and vague dread.

No sooner had he settled himself and his portmanteau in his new abode, than he sallied out to the public walk; there to sit on one chair, with his leg on another, eating ice, eyeing the passers-by, and reflecting on his future prospects.

As he sat vacantly staring, and as vacantly dreaming, a tall, handsome, wide-chested man, about five-and-forty, in the staff uniform, passed before him.

With him was a pretty little girl not above twelve years of age, prattling in a clear, lively, laughing voice, as she walked beside him.

This little lady, or more rather *citoyenne*, was well and fashionably arrayed. She wore a long, scanty

white frock, trailing after her on the ground; the waist was just beneath her shoulder-blades, and bound by a pink sash, hanging in two tails behind. Her sleeves were short; her little arms being covered by a pair of long, bright yellow gloves, drawn up above her elbow. Her costume was completed by a huge bonnet, something like a snail-shell, with a mussel-shell attached thereto as a brim.

She had a pretty little kittenish face, wide across the eyes, and narrowing down to a little, dimpled, delicate chin.

Charpentier, calling out "Colonel," sprang after the tall man, who, in his turn, exclaimed "*ce cher ami!*" when the two soldiers were folded in a fraternal embrace.

The colonel, taking a seat beside the lieutenant, and placing the little girl next him, the two friends proceeded to ask and to answer many questions.

Charpentier was informed that Col. Langeval had a staff appointment in Toulon, together with an apartment, where he should be happy to see the lieutenant; with whom he had become acquainted during the campaign in Italy.

Langeval was in turn told of Charpentier's misfortunes; the little girl laughing when he pulled off

his hat to exhibit his head, and the short crop that was sprouting on it.

"That is my little Zoé," said the colonel, adding, with a sigh, "she is the fac-simile of her mother."

Langeval had lost his wife about two years; in consequence of which Zoé had become that strange being, a beloved, spoilt, only daughter, brought up by a widowed father.

He had two sons at Paris in the military college; but his soul was wrapped up in Zoé. It is true that he sent her to school; but then it was only as a day boarder, as he could not have made up his mind to be even a week without her.

The day of which we are writing was a half holiday, wherefore Miss Zoé caused herself to be dressed in her best costume, wherein to accompany her papa to eat ices and *plaisirs*, and to walk with him on the promenade.

Charpentier did not fail to call on the colonel the very next day.

Langeval, like Charpentier, had risen from the ranks. His father was a Lyons silk manufacturer, who lost great sums when the troubles broke out; had been imprisoned because he was rich, and had

seen himself on the brink of ruin. He was, however, rapidly making up lost way.

The colonel, as a mere boy, detesting commerce and every thing appertaining to it, had run away from home, desks and high stools, and had enlisted as a private in a grenadier regiment. Having a real, sincere calling for military life, and being possessed of a military mind, he soon worked up to the grade of officer; from which first round of the ladder, by the aid of talent and a "bloody war," he was not very long before he reached the rank of colonel.

Langeval informed his visitor that he stood in need of a secretary, his last having volunteered for Egypt.

This employment he offered to the lieutenant, telling him that it would be a good pastime for him till he should be fit for more active work.

Charpentier accepted the colonel's offer with due thanks; Langeval promising to settle the affair for him with the proper authorities.

This was a fine windfall for the lieutenant; good pay, plenty of society, and a rich table: for the colonel kept a first-rate cook, as he was obliged to entertain: besides being somewhat of a gourmand. Charpentier was contracting a love of good cheer;

was beginning to talk about dishes and sauces, and to think hard fare the principal drawback to campaigning.

The lieutenant took a room in the same house in which Langeval had apartments; forthwith installing himself as secretary to the colonel.

As Lieutenant Charpentier possessed to a great degree those two gifts which are said to be essential to advancement in life: to wit, a bad heart and a good digestion, success followed him in all his undertakings.

He was soon quite at home in his new sphere of life, falling readily into the ways of those about him: his Norman accent and free modes being, by civilians, looked upon as military frankness, whilst soldiers pronounced him to be a thoroughly "*bon diable.*"

It would appear that, during the republican epoch, provided a man despised religion, deified morbid human reason with a flaw in it, and was ready to "deserve well of the country;" that was all that was necessary to make a perfect citizen. As for manners, the less refinement therein the better; refinement being deemed aristocratic and unpatriotic: so hard is it for mankind in general rightly to divide substance from shadow, accident from essentials; refinement being no more essential to tyranny than its

contrary is to patriotism: of which proposition the republican rulers were a notable example.

Before the revolution Charpentier would not have been tolerated in the grade of society corresponding to that in which he was now figuring. He would have been deemed a vivacious corporal: a kind of military monster; as it was he obtained great success, and Langeval always called him "*mon aimable Normand!*"

This amiable Norman revelled in the colonel's good cheer: his dinners both great and small; his three hour "*déjeûners de garçons;*" to all of which he had never seen the like. Then there was the high play, very different from privates' gambling; gold being won and lost at Langeval's, just as easily as copper at the guard-house.

Charpentier made rapid progress as a gamester; playing unfairly with a frank, open air; winning more than he lost, and keeping his own counsel on the subject.

The lieutenant was quite himself again. The quaking of spirit which had been called up during his sickness was gone: he never so much as thought of it. It was as when a stone has been cast into a pool mantled with green; the coating is broken into; the foul water beneath it is made visible, and ruffled

in circles; whilst mud rises slowly to the surface, with noisome stench. After a space the circles disappear; the mud sinks, the green weed hides the foul water; not a trace of any ruffling of the pool remains. So it was with Charpentier's soul: the smooth coating of worldly prosperity was entire; masking the mud and stench of depravity.

The lieutenant was a favourite with every one; as for Zoé she entertained a childish passion for him, which she did not conceal; whilst he gallanted her about, called her his little wife; accompanied her on the violin, danced with her, and taught her to gamble; to Langeval's infinite amusement. In his fond eyes Zoé could do no wrong.

This child was perfectly wretched if Charpentier paid attention, in her presence, to "*grown up*" ladies. He was to be hers, and hers only: she firmly believed that she was one day to marry him; and actually got up an approach to an "*attaque de nerfs*" on hearing that he had a *fiancée* in Normandy.

The poor colonel, in great bewilderment, instead of dealing roundly with Miss Zoé, and her folly, knew not what to do, or what to say. The only plan he could hit upon, was to beg the lieutenant to pretend that the report was a mere story. This was readily done by Charpentier; who was really fond

of Zoé, and greatly amused by her spoilt-child's ways.

"It is all false, Zoé," he said. "When I was quite a boy I had a country love, years ago; but I have no fancy for sabots now. Look here! she gave me this as a *gage d'amour:* she was a great bigot; but now it is yours for ever. There! Now let us go and play General Bonaparte's march."

To pacify a spoilt child, Antoine, without regret or remorse, had actually given her the little gold crucifix, Nanette's parting gift: one of her greatest treasures. *She* would rather have died than have parted with the garnet ring he had given her on his last visit to the village!

A year passed away, speeding rapidly for Charpentier amidst new found pleasures; he the less regretting his absence from the army, as tidings of the ill success of the Egyptian campaign reached France.

Nanette had learned from her lover of his illness, and of his present employment; all his accounts of himself being greatly exaggerated with a view to produce an effect.

To produce an effect!

Oh! weakness of a tawdry mind! What steps will not such a mind take, to compass such an end?

To produce an effect!

What steps will not a vain man take ; what sacrifices will he not make ? what sins will he not commit, to try and astonish his fellow worms ?

Oh ! man of vanity, despised by the wise ; hated by the weak, in whom thou succeedest in raising envy ; wherefore dost thou so disquiet thyself—wherefore dost thou so lose thyself, blind as thou art, for so poor, so dubious a gratification as the admiration of mankind ? a slave to others ; seeking that which may be withheld after all thy restless endeavours.

Nanette, simple and full of love, read, trembled, pitied and adored ; with all the tender passion of her gentle heart.

A gray, tranquil September day, was softly merging into night ; toil was exchanged for rest by man and cattle, as, amidst the noise of wheels, jingling bells, and the loud cracking of postilions' whips, the diligence from Paris to Rouen drew near the village of Saen.

Boys ran shouting to see the wondrous fabric pass ; whilst their elders, with less vivacious demonstrations, looked on it as it drew near, towering through the dust of its own raising. Contrary to the usual custom of the machine, it drew up opposite the little village inn on the "*grande place.*"

The boys closed in, chattering and staring; the village-dogs ran up and barked; boys and dogs being always first and foremost when anything unusual takes place in town or country.

All the other inhabitants of the "*place*" gaped in astonishment.

A portmanteau was handed from the roof of the diligence; from which altitude descended an officer in undress uniform, with a silver laced and tasseled "*bonnet de police*" on his head, and a silver-mounted meerschaum in his mouth. This officer was the owner of the portmanteau; and the object of attention and surprise on the part of the bystanders.

The whips cracked; the bells jingled; the diligence rattled: the dust flew; the officer and his portmanteau disappeared beneath the door-way of the inn; whilst boys, dogs, &c., dispersed, and quiet was restored.

The officer's first care on entering the inn was to ask what he could have for supper; the answer to his question being, that he might be served with *soupe aux citrouilles*, with *bouilli*, a *poulard aux cressons;* pigeons and an omelette; the whole to conclude with Neufchâtel cheese, salad and dessert.

The officer twirled his moustache, and said; "*c'est bon;*" sallying forth whilst the fowl was caught,

killed and dressed, and the rest of the dinner prepared.

Of course every one will have seen, at once, that this officer was Lieutenant Charpentier; arriving at the scenes of his childhood as Cæsar arrived in Gaul, "summâ diligentiâ," or "en haut de la diligence," as it was translated by a French schoolboy.

The lieutenant bent his steps towards the veuve Langlois' cot, about ten minutes' walk from Saen. In answer to his knock, the worm-eaten door was opened by Nanette; who had but just returned from hard work at farmer Harivel's cider press. The unexpected arrival and appearance of the officer, took from her all power of speech: she could only gaze and tremble. Charpentier caught her in his arms; held her awhile; and then received the veuve Langlois' warm-hearted embrace; whilst Tonton jumped up, gave him some violent pushes with his paws, and then capered about the room in an uncouth manner, as though to welcome the arrival of a friend.

Charpentier looked on Nanette; and she, stealthily, looked on him.

Charpentier found that his *fiancée* had altered during his three years' absence. Hard work and scant fare had thinned her; giving her a somewhat worn

appearance, in place of the roundness of her younger days.

Nanette was but four-and-twenty, but she looked three or four years older. Her eyes, however, were as fine as ever ; with even a more tender and a deeper expression than formerly.

The lieutenant was disappointed ; though he did not suffer his disappointment to appear.

Nanette, on her side, found her lover greatly altered both in costume and looks.

Charpentier, owing to good cheer and light work, had become somewhat fat for his years. This, however, gave him a certain presence, which imposed greatly on Nanette ; besides, his uniform and the scar on his forehead impressed her with a feeling of respect, which greatly increased her tenderness for him.

Women certainly *do* love and revere any mark of courage, added to a danger run, on the part of their lover.

The lieutenant was soon in the midst of a relation of the great deeds he had done, since he and Nanette parted ; she listening with breathless attention and fond admiration ; whilst her mother gave vent to her astonishment by exclamations in various keys, and divers degrees of strength, according as the subject affected her.

It was in vain that the widow and her daughter tried to prevail on the officer to sup with them. Greater dainties than those poor women could bestow awaited him at the inn ; to the inn therefore he repaired, after informing them that he intended to surprise his father, but that he considered it too late to do so that evening.

On arriving at his inn, Charpentier walked into a long, low room, dignified by the name of the *salle.* It contained a bench, running nearly the whole length of one of the walls ; in front of which bench stood a table as long as the seat. These and one or two chairs, were the furniture of the room.

At one end of the table a clean cloth and napkin, together with a cover, were placed in readiness for the lieutenant. At the other end sat a carter eating bread, cheese, and a pickled herring ; by the light of the sparkling wood-fire, and a very small tallow candle.

His feeding and drinking proceeding with great smackings and much sucking, drew the lieutenant's attention to him.

He perceived that the carter was round-backed and red-headed ; that he had smeared his tumbler all over with his greasy hands ; and that he drummed on the table with the point of his knife.

Charpentier saw at once that the unconscious carter was one of the playmates of his boyhood. However, he took care not to renew the acquaintance; and the carter rolled out of the room, just as the officer's soup, hot and smoking, was put on the table.

The lieutenant fully enjoyed the pleasure of a good supper, after having jolted along the whole day on the top of a diligence in a cloud of dust.

The wine was good, cool, and refreshing; the food well-dressed; Charpentier drowsy, yet not too drowsy; the fire brisk; and the autumn wind pleasantly moaning without.

As he eat he thought of Nanette; coming to the conclusion that he cared very little about her: that she was much altered; that years and labour would not improve her; and that she was in a grade of life far beneath him.

"If it was not for my father, I should never come near the place again," he said to himself, as he loaded his plate with cream cheese and salad.

At that very moment Nanette's fond heart was overflowing with love for him, as her weary head sunk on her hard pillow; and she thought how unworthy she was of so kind and so noble a man as the lover of her girlish days.

Maître Charpentier was overjoyed on beholding

his officer son ; whom the whole village soon flocked to see, and to congratulate on his advancement. The lieutenant took these demonstrations with rather a superb air, beginning to think "all those peasants" bores, and quite beneath him.

The villagers in their turn became disgusted with him : those of his old friends who did not tell him their mind, as it is called, treated him with silent contempt.

His conduct towards Potier was patronising and offensive : in short, prosperity did not sit well on Charpentier ; it narrowed his mind, and puffed him up with intense conceit ; causing every one either to quarrel with, or coldly to withdraw from him.

His visit to Normandy was anything but satisfactory ; his father, Nanette, and her mother being the only people who looked favourably on him.

Charpentier began to find Nanette's love for him a troublesome affair. He wished, yet did not like, to break through his engagement with her ; so he settled the matter in his own mind by saying : "perhaps, after all, she may one day make me a good nurse ; therefore I will let things take their course. As for loving her, I could just as soon love old Madame Potier, poor Nanette looks so '*diablement*' starved, faded, and *passée*."

It will have been perceived that Lieutenant Charpentier had contracted all the pleasant, damning vices of military life. As for the great and manly virtues of that state, he troubled himself about them no more than he did about any others; virtue being a word not to be found in his vocabulary.

The officer took delight in swaggering about the villages of Saen and St. Eloy in full dress uniform; putting on an air of defiance and contempt, greatly admired by the loose portion of rustic youth; much despised by those who knew better; whilst many pitied him—pitying Nanette yet more than they did her scampish lover.

During one of his strolls he fell in with his little foe Daridolle. The landed proprietor was mounted on a small rat-like, currish horse; cat-hammed, high-boned, with a long switch tail, and a hot temper. This quadruped, who was very like his rider, the citizen was pleased to deck out in a species of oriental harness; calling him "*Mahomet, arabe pur-sang!*"

Daridolle, who always appeared in the height of the fashion, being intensely vain of his little person, was arrayed in a sky-blue frock, with black velvet collar; the said collar forming a point between the shoulders. This point, however, was hidden by one of the horns of the *incroyable's* huge three-cornered hat; a hat far

larger than the largest ever seen on a drawing-room-day coachman. From each horn of this head-dress hung a round gold tassel or ball, about the size of a walnut; whilst a gigantic tricoloured cockade, nearly as large as a sun-flower, ornamented the front. The prodigious hat was worn at the back of the head; trailing down Daridolle's little spine. A long lock of hair was brushed down to the bridge of his nose, as though to counterbalance the cocked hat; and his lean cheeks were decorated by a pair of straight and scrubby whiskers. Yellow leather breeches encased his legs; being met by a pair of wrinkled boots, somewhat like hessians, save that they were cut into a notch in front and a point behind. If these boot points had been united by a line, two others being drawn from them to the point of the velvet collar, a perfect isosceles triangle would have been thus formed.

Daridolle's neckcloth covered his chin, and he shouldered a huge hooked stick, thick and heavy; a stick very like those sported by fauns, Tityrus, Melibæus, and other classical shepherds, only that it appeared to be afflicted with warts from hook to point.

Charpentier strode up to the citizen; taking Mahomet by the rein, whilst he laid his other hand heavily on the rider's angular knee.

Daridolle's blood ran cold at the soldier's touch.

"*Ah! ça, mon petit,*" cried the lieutenant, shaking him, "I have to thank *you* for my epaulettes. Without your brilliant thought I should never have been where I am. Let's be friends, and I'll dine with you to-day: name the hour."

The trembling citizen, reassured by these words, informed Charpentier that he desired nothing better; that he dined at four, and that he should be delighted to present the lieutenant to the brilliant society assembled at his villa.

Daridolle, after the fall of his uncle Gracchus of the Convention, took a sudden jump from the bloodthirsty ruffian style, to that of an *incroyable;* lisping, mincing, and dropping the letter *r*.

"Bon *jou*, au *evoi*, *ser* ami," he cried, as he cantered off; enchanted at the turn his meeting with Antoine Charpentier had taken.

The lieutenant, having a whole month on his hands, and finding village society somewhat insipid —more especially when his fellow-villagers had sent him to Coventry—was luckily struck by the bright idea of making peace with Daridolle, and so inviting himself to eat and drink with him and his allies; meaning to keep his eyes open, and to see what was to be done towards fleecing the goodly company.

It was in vain that Nanette looked for him beneath her mother's humble roof, on the evening of his introduction to Daridolle's den of vice. She, anxious and sad, sat knitting with the veuve Langlois by the light of their solitary candle; whilst Charpentier disported himself among half a dozen cravat-buried *incroyables*, and three ladies: the latter clad in rose-coloured *guernsey frocks* with *tights* of the same hue, over which hung soft transparent Indian muslin dresses, without sleeves, clinging in classical folds to their limbs. One of these wore a fascinating Titus peruke; the second was decked with a spangled veil; whilst the third allowed her hair to wave in curls down her back, being in part confined by fillets of scarlet riband: they all wore sandals and girt their waists with zones.

Far different were they from poor, simple, hard-working, honest Nanette; with her pure, religious spirit, and her rough peasant dress and noisy sabots.

Charpentier, as he wended his way to his inn late at night, told himself, without disguise, that he far preferred the witty, noisy, unscrupulous, classical personages he had just quitted, to his homely, faithful Nanette.

The lieutenant had made a pretty good harvest at

play, and promised himself much amusement among his new acquaintances.

It may be supposed that immense scandal arose, when it was known in the respective villages of Saen and St. Eloy that Antoine Charpentier consorted with Daridolle and his gang.

Maître Charpentier, with tears and trembling hands, besought his son to return at once to Toulon, and to fly from such society as *that*.

The officer, laughing, replied ;

"My good father, the world is not a nunnery ; and a young soldier should mix with every one, and learn to live. Tranquillise yourself, and leave me to my devices : I know pretty well what I'm about !"

"But Nanette?"

"Oh ! Nanette, Nanette ; as for Nanette— !"

The lieutenant whistled ; turned on his heel ; wished his father good morning, and so left him.

The schoolmaster had not been able to persuade Antoine to quit the village inn to dwell with him ; the officer not being willing to give up the good cooking he there found, for Maître Charpentier's *pot-au-feu* and weak cider.

He considered that provided he paid his father a daily visit, he thereby quite fulfilled his filial duty.

Arsène Potier ground his teeth and felt inclined

to throttle Charpentier, when he heard of his proceedings.

He made up his mind calmly to remonstrate with the lieutenant on his ways; and that for the sake of his fondly loved Nanette.

Charpentier whistled through his teeth, but heard the miller to the end; then said impertinently: "*Vous dites ?*"

Potier reddened, and turned to depart.

"Don't be in a rage, *sac-à-farine !*" cried Charpentier laughing. "I give you leave to make love to her yourself: I suppose that's what you're driving at. What a hubbub you country people make, because a man mixes in the society of his class. You won't catch me here again in a hurry !"

Potier restrained himself, leaving Charpentier without another word. If he had given way to his passions, he would, then and there, have shed the soldier's blood.

Nanette neither reproached nor annoyed Antoine; she only asked him timidly if it was true that he was intimate with Daridolle.

"Yes, my little Nanette," he replied gaily. "Don't let that alarm you. He belongs to the class I have risen to. But the people here don't understand fashionable life: they represent Daridolle's society

as vicious and horrible; make long faces, and throw up their hands. Don't attend to them. We are very gay and merry at the citizen's, but as harmless as doves."

With these words Charpentier drew forth his pipe and tobacco pouch, proceeding to smoke. He never failed to do so when he visited his *fiancée;* deeming that it filled up the weary time, and served instead of conversation.

When Charpentier's leave of absence had expired, and he, with his portmanteau, was once more perched on the top of the diligence, Nanette's heart sank within her. She vaguely felt that Antoine did not love her so well as he had done.

During his stay he had not once spoken of their marriage. His last words rang in her ears, giving her a sorrowful sensation: he had said, taking his meerschaum from his mouth to kiss her:

"Adieu, my little Nanette. Think of me, and don't work so hard: it will quite spoil your beauty."

The veuve Langlois saw plainly that Charpentier's love for her daughter was rapidly waning; but she had not the heart to distress Nanette by so much as hinting a suspicion on the subject.

She perceived that her daughter was sad, beyond

the sadness of parting; though Nanette did her best to be as usual, trying to persuade herself that the lieutenant loved her as well as ever; that his manners, and not his heart, were changed; they having taken the hue of the "*great*" society in which he mixed.

"I will be patient," she said to herself, as she led the horses to their work in the fields. "I will hope, too, and not despair. Above all I will think on poor M. le Curé's words about everything turning out for the best to the righteous. He used also to say, that it is not well to fix the heart too much on the things of this world; for that they are apt to slip away, and leave us desolate. Alas! alas! how my heart is fixed on Antoine. Ah! how I wish that that good M. le Curé was here! He could advise me, and set my heart in the right way: he was so learned, and so wise, so pious, and so gentle!"

Nanette tried hard to forget Antoine's last words; as well as his last careless look: the only words and look of his she did not wish to remember.

Arsène Potier thought long on Charpentier's speech to him. It was quite evident to him that the lieutenant did not care one straw for Nanette.

"Ah! if she would but love me; or even allow me to love her," thought the poor fellow. "How

happy I would make her : she should never repent the day on which she became mine !"

Arsène groaned as he looked on his maimed hand.

"I can but try ! Nanette is so good, she might not mind my misfortune : she might think of my heart, and forget my hand !"

So thought Potier, resolving to try his fate ; then shrinking into himself ; till, after many a struggle, he began gently to feel his way.

Alas ! for Arsène : he soon found that Nanette had never loved Antoine so well, or so firmly, as she did then.

Arsène was generosity itself, and full of delicate compassion for Nanette's feelings ; otherwise he might have told her of all the evil he knew of her *fiancé ;* besides repeating to her the speech Antoine had made, when Potier had remonstrated with him.

Arsène felt that his love was as hopeless as ever ; Nanette's being still so entirely given to a man who, in his own mind, viewed his engagement to her as null.

France was about to undergo another change.

On the 8th of October, 1779, General Bonaparte suddenly appeared in France, having left the command of the army of Egypt to Kléber.

Bonaparte landed at Fréjus, was received there and everywhere else with immense delight and rejoicing, great illuminations and noisy bell-ringing. The little thin general had arrived to set things in order; and to see to his own advancement.

On the 9th of November, better known as the 18th Brumaire, three provisional consuls were appointed: to wit, Bonaparte (of course), Sièyes, and Ducos.

Next came Napoleon's *coup de théâtre;* which ended by a detachment of his sturdy grenadiers, commanded by Murat, marching up the hall in which the deputies were assembled, and silently sweeping out the chattering multitude, as a besom would sweep away dust and rubbish.

It was all very fine to call the general Cæsar and Cromwell; the grenadiers loved him, and settled the affair in spite of rhetoric.

Napoleon was now in possession of civil as well as military power. He never finally lost either till he lost all at Waterloo.

One of Bonaparte's first measures was to restore religion to France; to open the churches; to recall the priests; and to do away with the *décade.*

The goddess Reason was by him torn down; and shown to be but Folly in a new disguise.

Anon came a consular decree for an army of re-

serve, to be formed of all veterans then unemployed; as well as for a levy of 30,000 men, then first called conscripts.

It was not long before "the little corporal" took up snug quarters at the Tuileries, or "*palais du gouvernement.*"

He was decidedly getting on.

Napoleon had promised peace to France; but the "*attitude*" of Austria and England rendered war necessary.

The consul amused the foe by a "ragged regiment" kind of army at Dijon; the subject of endless fun and caricature. The real army, however, was all ready; and whilst it was believed that Bonaparte was with his "*raw material*" at Dijon, some said at Paris, he was "over the hills and far away!": that is, he and his army were over the St. Bernard.

There was a decree that no consul should command an army.

"Well and good," says Bonaparte, "but there is no decree that a consul should not be *present* with an army!"

Berthier, therefore, became *nominal* Commander-in-chief of the army of operation; Napoleon was *present:* that is, he had the sole and entire command of it.

The future emperor would not allow a decree to tie his hands, and spoil his fortune.

Our friend, Lieutenant Charpentier, on hearing of war, had quitted Colonel Langeval; and had left Zoé plunged in grief, and inundated with tears. The lieutenant promised that he would return to her covered with glory; but the young lady for many weeks drooped about the house, as one who has lost her love: whilst her school-studies languished, and she informed all her schoolfellows that she would never marry any man but an officer; and that that officer must have a scar on his forehead, besides being able to play on the violin, to dance perfectly, and to sing Italian songs.

Charpentier was attached to a line regiment in the army of operation; and with it he crossed the St. Bernard.

The passage of that mountain was anything but an easy affair; however, "the little corporal" said that it was to be crossed, and crossed it was accordingly.

"Where there is a will, there is a way!"

A thousand pounds had been sent to the monks—monks as celebrated as their mountain—in order that they might provide food for the toiling host.

The guns were dismounted, and dragged by the soldiers across the St. Bernard; these guns being each

placed in a little sledge, or rather trough, made of a tree cut in two from root to top and then hollowed out to the length of the gun; the wheels and carriages were carried by mules. All this was hard work: in some places a hundred men were required to each gun.

Charpentier, having grown very fat during his easy life at Toulon, was dreadfully tired and out of breath as he marched up the mountain.

"*Ouf!*" he cried—"this may be all very good to make a fat man slim; but it's rib-breaking work; and this mountain air gives one such a wolfish appetite, with never a *restaurant* to slip into. Ah!" he continued, as the drums beat the "*pas de charge*" to enliven the men over a difficulty—"ran-plan-plan-*et-cetera*, I'd rather hear them beating for bed or dinner: *'cré nom de mille diables*, I never took such a walk as this in my life; it ought to lead to a forest of laurels!"

David has represented Napoleon riding up the grand St. Bernard on a huge, heavy war-horse, who seems to be staggered at the rocks before him: as well he might be; and who furthermore appears to be about to sit up and beg like a dog; whilst his rider is digging his spurs into him, as though to hold himself on. The consul is pointing at some-

thing, and looking at something else; both of which somethings are left to the imagination of the spectator.

The names of Hannibal and of Charlemagne are carved on the rocks; whether by themselves or by an admirer of theirs does not appear.

"Poetry, I suppose!" as *the* Duke is reported to have contemptuously said, as he viewed one of Turner's most exaggerated red and yellow performances.

The fact is that tight little "Boney," mounted the St. Bernard, sometimes on foot, sometimes on an unpoetic, but most sure-footed mule, recommended to his notice by the Prior of the convent; whilst he slid down an almost perpendicular glacier on the other side in a little sledge; kept in place by a robust guide in the rear.

Ah! Napoleon was a real warrior: all his ideas and everything about him were military; down to the uniform in which he now reposes beneath the dome of the chapel of the "*Invalides!*"

May that other thorough-bred soldier, Wellington, have as grand, as august a tomb as *the Emperor!* He too should have slept his last sleep in uniform, and in his war-earned decorations; not in the civilian shroud, in which the undertaker sends every peaceable old gentleman to his long home.

It was an agreeable surprise to Charpentier, as well as to many others, when, on arriving at the Chartreux hospital, he beheld tables spread before the monastery, with monks in attendance.

"*Ah! au moins; voilà du bon et du fricot!*" cried the unsentimental lieutenant, his eyes sparkling at the sight.

Each man received from the Chartreux a piece of bread and cheese, together with a tumbler of wine.

After the biscuit dipped in snow, wherewith the troops had solaced themselves on their march, the refreshment at the convent appeared as nectar and ambrosia; although Charpentier was gourmand enough to say, that he thought onions might, with advantage, have been added to the feast.

After the celebrated passage of the grand St. Bernard, the French had a brush with, and beat the Austrians. Their arrival was so sudden and unlooked for, that there was no army to oppose them. They received a check before the town of Bard, in the vale of Aosta; but Napoleon and his army were soon at their old quarters in Milan. Here Charpentier beat up his former acquaintances, and utilised his time in pleasure; whilst he, as usual, replenished his pockets at cards; and strove to regain the weight he had lost on his late march, by dining at the ex-

pense of those to whom his hilarity and conviviality made him welcome.

The lieutenant, however, did not remain there long; the army not having been brought to Italy on a party of pleasure.

The Austrians, with regard to the French, played the same part which a slice of ham plays in a sandwich; that is to say, their army was between the forces of Napoleon, and those of Massena: the consul having made his sudden and unheard of inroad into Italy with a view to taking his foes in the rear, and thus compassing them about.

In due course, Marengo was made for ever famous, by the great fight which there took place.

This mighty battle began at day-break on the 14th of June, 1800; just fifteen years and four days before that of Waterloo.

Marengo at one time went hard with the French: they were beaten; and a good cavalry charge would have finished them. This charge, however, was not executed.

The French left wing was scattered and pursued by the foe; the right, under Lannes, rallied.

Napoleon with his staff, and some two hundred grenadiers of the Guard, were visible in the midst of the wide-spreading plain of Marengo.

He had stationed reserves between Garafolo and Marengo ; and on these reserves, orders were given to the army to retreat.

Napoleon, moreover, sent an aide-de-camp to desire Desaix to bring up his force. Poor Desaix, Bonaparte's friend and favourite, had but just rejoined him from Egypt.

He was soon in the field with six thousand fresh men. Napoleon had meanwhile shown a new front, and turned the Austrians.

Just then came a lull: very few shots were heard. One of these, however, found its man ; hit Charpentier on the thigh, and broke the bone : the lieutenant fell to the earth : trying in vain again to rise.

Then came a grand cavalry charge ; Desaix's force charging the Austrians in front; whilst Kellerman, with six hundred heavy dragoons, took them in flank.

Just as Desaix was giving the word to his men, a ball struck him in the breast. The men charged without him ; he falling to the ground, and dying directly after he had sent a last message to Napoleon. His body was found after the fight, stripped and naked. Bonaparte, bitterly grieving, caused it to be carried to Milan, embalmed, and buried on the Grand St. Bernard. This young hero was carried to

his grave by weeping soldiers, who had served under him.

When the great battle was won, and the Austrians were routed; the smoke rolled away; the noise of firing ceased; and descending night found Charpentier still lying among the fifteen hundred wounded Frenchmen on the field.

A burning thirst dried him up; whilst racking cramps had seized on his broken, unset thigh.

"*Au diable les batailles: j'en suis tout à fait revenu!*" he cried, in answer to the enthusiasm of some of his wounded neighbours; who, in the midst of their torments, rejoiced in the triumph of the French army.

The calm moon was shining over the plain of Marengo; rendering ghastly death yet more ghastly, as her tranquil rays showed thousands of corpses looking livid beneath her light.

Charpentier's blasphemies and oaths accorded very ill with her pure light; but his loud cries for help at length brought him succour.

The swearing lieutenant was carried off; his thigh set; and himself made "as comfortable as circumstances would permit."

By Marengo, Antoine Charpentier was hoisted up to the grade of captain: whereat he was immensely

gratified, both as regarded rank and pay; although he would gladly have dispensed with his broken thigh, together with the weary confinement, the fever, and the aching sameness of posture to which it reduced him.

Then, too, he had fears for the beauty of his limb: a limb of which he was not a little vain; and which certainly looked extraordinarily well in the white leather garment wherein it was wont to appear before the public.

An ill-set leg was the first cause which produced the Jesuits.

Charpentier's was well set *secundum artem;* and neither religious order, nor anything else arose from the fracture: save and except great irritability of temper on the part of the captain; together with two very flaming letters, one to his father, the other to Colonel Langeval, containing an account of himself, and of Marengo, written in his usual style of bravado, egotism, and exaggeration. This time no letter was sent to Nanette!

Zoé read that which was addressed to her father; and was made happy by being put in undisputed possession of it.

Nanette rejoiced in Antoine's good fortune; though she trembled at the idea of his wound; and felt a

pang of grief on merely receiving a message from him through his father, instead of a tender letter, such as he had formerly written to her.

"*Ma mère*, why does *he* not write to me?" she asked suddenly of her mother; as they sat before the door eating their frugal supper.

The veuve Langlois, taken by surprise, had difficulty in finding an answer wherewith to satisfy Nanette. The true reply would have been: "Because he no longer cares for you, *cocotte*." But with this, the widow could not make up her mind to pain her daughter. Nanette sighed; eat in silence; and fixed her large, melancholy eyes on the clear evening sky.

The restoration of religion was a cause of great joy and happiness in the country; although Paris laughed at it, preferring the goddess Reason.

To Nanette and to her mother the opening of churches caused them to bless the name of Bonaparte.

Once more they heard the sound of the church bell; once more they were able to attend mass, and to pray in a church: to perform all their religious duties as in former days.

The curé of Saen, their present parish, was a returned *émigré*, a man nearly sixty years of age; pos-

sessed of the sweetest temper and the most gentle heart that man was ever blest with.

Before the revolution, the Abbé Berton had been curé of a small parish in the South of France.

When blood began to flow he emigrated to England, and took up his abode in a small, dark room, a "*three pair back*," in a narrow street of smoky, murky London.

The heart of the priest sunk a little on first breathing the thick, heavy town atmosphere; and on finding how cold, reserved, and taciturn the English were; but his French spirit rallied, in spite of the view over roofs and chimney-pots seen from his window; so different from that of the distant Pyrenees and the purple sky, which he had been wont to look on from his parsonage.

L'Abbé Berton set about cultivating acquaintances among émigrés; whilst he earned a kind of livelihood by giving lessons in French and music, and by cutting out roses from carrots and turnips, wherewith to decorate tongues and to garnish dishes.

The poor abbé's handiwork appeared at many a well covered board; whilst he was eating a supper of bread and cheese in his little, back room. Over the chimney piece in this room hung his only trea-

sure; a large crucifix carved in wood, which had belonged to his mother.

On returning to France, the abbé found that all the church lands were sold; the clergy being paid by government. In spite of the Concordat of 1801, whereby it was arranged that the state should endow the churches, the state has never so endowed them. The French church has no land to this day; and, as the sum for payment of the clergy is voted from year to year, government has power to raise or lower their salaries at pleasure: from archbishops to *vicaires*, they are all paid on this wise.

L'Abbé Berton thanked heaven on finding himself settled in the parsonage of a healthy Norman village; after the years he had passed in the unwholesome "*three pair back*" in dark London. He hung up his crucifix, and gave his whole soul to the duties of his parish.

The abbé was tall and stout; his double chin was benevolent; his smile and his soft dark eyes were full of charity and gentleness.

He was soon adored in his parish; and looked upon as the universal friend of the village: every one wondering how they could ever have lived without him.

Nanette had cherished a hope that, so soon as

religion should be restored to France, Antoine would not fail to marry her according to the rites of the church. It was an epoch she had always looked forward to as certain, and not far distant: an epoch on which her hopes had long been fixed.

The event she had wished for had come to pass: the churches were open as heretofore; marriages were therein celebrated; but Antoine had ceased to write to her, and Nanette's mind was full of perplexity and care.

"Ah!" she said, "I have fixed my heart too firmly on perishing earthly good; and it is now slipping from me!"

This thought, however, did not console Nanette. She determined yet to wait a little longer with patience and resignation; hoping against hope that Antoine might yet return.

How little Nanette knew that worthy!

She believed him to possess the same mind as the village Antoine who had wooed and won her: that mind being, she opined, quartered in the handsome body of the soldier Antoine, to whom she looked up with so much reverence!

Two long years passed slowly away. No letter from Captain Charpentier: even the messages he

had sent to Nanette through his father, became less and less frequent; then ceased entirely.

Nanette's innocent gaiety died away with her hopes: she became silent and looked pensive; although she performed all her duties with the same nicety and precision as she had been wont to do.

Arsène Potier, seeing that his forebodings had come to pass, longed to punish *M. le Capitaine* according to his deserts.

The scorching summer sun was darting down his yellow rays on the face of the globe, burning up the dry grass, and ripening the fruits of the earth.

The rich wheat, tall and heavy, was fit for reaping; and farmer Harivel's labourers, male and female, were abroad in his fields, sickle in hand, bringing the full ears to the ground.

There were more women than men at the work: their white caps looked dazzling beneath the sun's rays, as the wearers moved about among the corn.

They chatted and laughed as they worked: the reaping seemed, to the lively labourers, to be rather an amusement than a toil.

Nanette was among them; but she neither talked nor laughed so merrily as the rest: although she always had a smile and a kind answer for her com-

panions ; being most anxious never to damp the gaiety of those about her.

Nanette had become the favourite at Harivel's farm, as well as in the village of Saen. There was many a man who would gladly have married her, had it not been for her engagement with Charpentier ; which being well known, both far and near, was as a barrier to keep them off.

The villagers suspected that something had gone amiss between the soldier and his *fiancée ;* she being so changed, and his letters having ceased : a circumstance which was spread about by le père Quesnel, with many expressions of sorrow and surprise.

As Nanette reaped, her thoughts were fixed on Antoine, and on past happiness. The sun darted his beams full on her forehead and on her brown face, deepening yet more the sunburnt tint of her skin.

The last words she had heard from Antoine flashed across her mind, and she stopped an instant in her work ; her heart beating, and tears filling her eyes.

" Adieu, my little Nanette. Think of me ; and don't work so hard, it will quite spoil your beauty !"

She repeated these words two or three times.

" It was for you, Antoine," she said to herself, as she dried her eyes with her apron, and once again

began to ply her sickle, "for you, and for my mother, that my hard work began. I hoped to have earned something to support you; if you should have returned home maimed from the wars. Now you are an officer; and the nation will take care of you: though Heaven grant you may never need either care or nursing!"

Nanette reaped mechanically, so many thoughts were on that day rising in her mind. She neither heard the blithe singing of the larks, nor the voices, loud and gay, of her fellow-workers.

Nanette possessed plain common sense; wherefore, putting herself out of the question, she, on that glowing corn-field, reviewed Antoine's position, as the tall wheat fell before her.

She saw that he had risen to a class far above that in which they were both born; and that he had left her far beneath him.

"Antoine's courage," she thought, "has placed him where he is; and he is still tied to me by his engagement. He now associates with beautiful ladies, far more worthy of him than I am: but he is so generous and so noble, he would never break the word he has given to me. It is my duty to loose him from it, and to set him free. It is quite impossible that a handsome, polite officer like Antoine, should

dream of marrying a poor, hard-worked, sunburnt countrywoman like me. I am not what I was when he first left me, though my heart is the same: it is no use trying to deceive myself; Antoine never writes to me; never even sends me one little word through Maître Charpentier: *his* heart has changed! He no doubt loves some pretty young lady with white hands; and it is quite natural that he should."

Here Nanette glanced at her own thin, sunburnt hands and wrists, so industriously working; at sight of which she both sighed and smiled.

Whilst the other labourers sang and gambolled at their mid-day recreation, Nanette sat apart beneath a tree, with three or four old people. These restored themselves by sleep; she sat with half-closed eyes, as she mused, and composed a letter to the faithless captain.

The step she was about to take gave her great pain: but she considered it to be her duty to free Antoine from his word; and therefore she made up her mind to do so, whatever it might cost her.

At eve the corn-field was deserted, and left to night and silence: the august, tranquil stars looking down upon the puny toil of fallen men, as they glimmered with serene majesty through the warm summer air.

Nanette sat alone in her little bed-room; the sweet scent of woodbine spreading through it from the open window.

She was slowly and carefully writing her last letter to Antoine: the visionary Antoine of her heart; a being who would never see it: it would be read by the real Antoine; a creature of whom Nanette would never have been able to form the least idea. How little she imagined, when she had with such delight and perseverance learnt to write under the teaching of Maître Charpentier, in order that she might correspond with her *fiancé;* how little she then imagined that she should ever write such a letter as the one she was now engaged upon.

Nanette's task was finished; she read her work over, folded it, and directed it in her best hand.

She then listened. Her mother was sleeping, and Nanette softly descended the ladder into the room below. There she opened her oak chest, from which she took the silver cap she was to have worn at her wedding. Ten years had passed away since that wedding was to have taken place; and the silver embroidery of the cap, despite Nanette's care, was somewhat tarnished: besides which, the lace and muslin had grown rather yellow.

She looked too on her wedding garments; think-

ing, as she did so, on past scenes, and on past feelings, now for ever gone.

Nanette took the cross, Maître Charpentier's gift, from the paper and cotton in which it reposed. The gold was as bright as ever; shining brilliantly beneath the light of Nanette's candle.

"Ah!" she thought, as she looked on it, "the things of heaven remain for ever bright and lasting; whilst those of earth tarnish and pass away."

Nanette slowly returned the cross to its envelope; little wotting that her mind had entertained a poetic sentiment.

Then she took the packet of Antoine's letters from the chest: letters so carefully preserved; whilst her's to Antoine had served him to show off, and to light pipes with. Not one of Nanette's was then in existence.

She read the first and the last of these epistles, and shed many tears over them; then locking up her chest, she sought her bed with a sad heart, yet with an approving conscience.

On awaking the following morning, Nanette took from beneath her pillow, the letter she had written the night before. Having read it over several times, she found nothing to alter, either in that or in her resolution.

Nanette left the letter with her mother; begging her to read it and to think over the step she was about to take, whilst she proceeded to her hard work in the corn-field.

In the course of that day, the tears often stole down her brown cheeks as she reaped; but she strengthened her heart by reflecting that she was obeying the voice of her conscience: a voice which, from childhood, she had resolved should never call to her in vain.

"Everything is for the best to the righteous; if not in this world, at least in that which is to come."

These words she often repeated to herself; little dreaming, as she did so, how much misery she had escaped in not becoming Charpentier's wife.

No woman could have been happy, married to the Marengo captain. He had in him the germ of all that is bad: even village life and Nanette would not have rendered him righteous. Had he remained a peasant, he would have become, as years rolled over him, one of the skittle-playing, gambling, gallanting, rollicking members of the community: one of those men who are all fun and frolick among their compeers; whilst they have either a broken-hearted or a scolding wife at home; a horde of children and no work.

The veuve Langlois greatly approved of poor Nanette's letter, as well as of her conduct. The widow saw that Antoine would never marry his *fiancée;* and she hoped that, once freed from him, Nanette might yet be happy in another marriage with some more worthy man: that worthy man being Arsène Potier, a son-in-law after her own heart.

It now only remained that Nanette should seal her letter, and take it to Maître Charpentier, begging him to enclose it to his son.

On the Sunday afternoon next following, Nanette took her way to her native village, and sought the old schoolmaster's cot. As she went she heard the lively sound of drum and violin in the orchard, where the villagers met for their Sunday dance: those rural balls having been revived, since the *décade* had been abolished. Nanette thought on the days when she used to dance beneath the apple-trees; when Antoine danced so well, and danced with her more than with any other village girl. She remembered how proud she was of him, and how happy she felt.

Nanette quickened her pace; for the tears were beginning to flow, at the pictures of other days which arose before her.

She was never seen at village fêtes and dances: she felt that she had done with them for ever.

Maître Charpentier was greatly grieved when Nanette told her tale and gave him her letter.

"Antoine," he said in faltering tones, "is a bad son and a *mauvais sujet:* he is quite unworthy of you, dear child. He is ungrateful; and, I fear, beginning to be ashamed of his birth, and of his old father. I do not wish for money: I have enough for my few wants; but my son has never offered to help me. His letters too are shorter than they were; and I seldom hear from him. Read that, dear Nanette." Nanette, with a beating heart, took the letter which the schoolmaster unfolded and put into her hand; and which he had drawn from between the leaves of an old tattered dictionary.

It ran as follows:—

"Paris, August 2nd, 1803.

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"Discharges and leave of absence have taken place to a great extent in the army. I have taken advantage of the latter to visit Paris; going every where, and amusing myself from morning till night.

"I am in all societies high and low; and I flatter myself that no one would imagine me to be the son of a peasant. Are you not proud of me, my dear

father? You will be still more so, when you learn that my breast is decorated with the cross of the legion of honour; the new decoration which the first consul has given to France. Pray do not forget to inform every one of this. I am just starting for a grand dinner by subscription in the Palais Royal, to which I am invited by a friend; a dinner at twenty francs a head. What do you think of that?

"Adieu, my dear father,

"Your submissive and devoted son,

ANTOINE CHARPENTIER,

"Capitaine au —ème de ligne."

Nanette looked very much puzzled on reading the Captain's letter to his father: a letter not very remarkable either for good feeling, or for filial piety.

"What do you think of it?" inquired the poor old schoolmaster.

"I am afraid prosperity has made a great alteration in Antoine: but perhaps his heart may be as good as ever, though he is obliged to put on the manners of the great people he lives with."

"He might drop them with his father, Nanette!" replied Maître Charpentier.

Nanette pondered over Antoine's letter as she returned to her home.

"A dinner at twenty francs a head," she said, as she gave her mother an account of what she had read. "How dreadful, when there are so many poor people who would be glad of a dinner at five sous!"

"So it is, *cocotte;* but rich greedy people think only of themselves, and of what strange and costly thing they shall eat next. It kills them in the long run, but that don't prevent their doing it; neither does it keep them from spending thousands on their stomachs!"

Nanette felt that she should like to see Antoine in his decoration; but as he was no longer to be hers, she tried to drive the thoughts both of himself, his dinner, and his honours from her mind.

When Charpentier received Nanette's letter he was yawning and stretching himself in bed; being in a most diabolical humour, owing to a loss at play the night before; when a bold, clever, charming actress, at a supper at her house, had managed to win more than half of all he possessed.

Charpentier was counting his losses, and feeling unable to get up, or to do anything but swear and roll about, when his landlady's son brought him his

letters. The Captain leant out of bed, caught up a boot, and threw it, half in fun half in anger, at the boy. The boy choosing to take it in fun, applied his thumb to his nose, made fan-sticks of his fingers, and so left the room: whilst Charpentier looked over his letters.

That from his father was touching in the extreme; full of advice, and tender reproaches written from his fatherly heart.

"*Excusez du peu!*" was the Captain's only remark as he threw it down and took up Nanette's.

Having read the straightforward, simple, tender epistle, he turned it over; looked at the address; and rubbing his eyes sleepily, threw it on the bed; from whence it slipped down to the polished brick floor, where it was suffered to remain.

"Nanette has given me my discharge—*ça en valait bien la peine.* I should have discharged myself when convenient. Not very flattering—but, however! I wish la Faustine had been strangled, before I played with her; she knows more tricks than I do; but she don't catch me at cards with *her* again: I shall only bet where she is concerned; and betting on her is a pretty safe affair."

These thoughts were followed by a loud yawn, succeeded by a comfortable settling of himself in his

bed ; which being accomplished, Captain Charpentier fell into a profound, dreamless sleep, that kept him snoring and motionless till a late hour in the afternoon.

Having dressed himself, he sallied forth, his cross of the legion of honour decking his breast, to seek out his ally Daridolle, then in Paris.

On reaching the abode of his little friend, two men dressed in grey coats turned up with black, stood before the *porte-cochère*. They had just rung, and were waiting to be let in by the porter, through the little door that opened in one of the folds of the great gates. Beside them, and leaning against the wall, was a plain wooden coffin, with an angular lid ; and smelling of freshly cut wood, and quick lime.

"*'Pristi !*" cried Charpentier, starting : "who's that ugly wooden *surtout* for ?"

"For M. Daridolle, *fils*," was the reply ; the words monsieur and madame beginning to reappear in the French language.

"*Père*, you mean, not *fils*," said the Captain, tapping the coffin with his cane.

"No, sir, I mean *fils*. A little, thin young man, like a skinned rabbit."

"When did he die ?"

"Last night between twelve and one !"

"What of?"

"Want of strength to live. He was worn out; and couldn't have lived longer if he had tried."

The porter looked out.

"Ah!" quoth he, "we must open one *battant* of the gate for *that*. Stop a minute."

The *battant* being duly opened, the two *croquemorts* trotted in with their light weight, and the door closed behind them.

It was quite true that little Daridolle, after cramming as much iniquity as he possibly could into a few short years, and worn out by the life he led, had the night before expired in the odour of infidelity, surrounded by the first physicians in Paris; who were, however, unable to keep his tainted soul in his shadow of a body.

"*Diable, quel ennui!*" said Charpentier to himself, as he sauntered off towards the Palais Royal. "I made sure of a good dinner from that little fellow; besides a good chance of making up, at his expense, for the robberies of that creature Faustine!"

Captain Charpentier wandered about till a late hour, in quest of any somebody who would give him a choice dinner; but his search being on that day made in vain, he was forced to treat himself, and to dine at his own expense.

The Palais Royal was the Captain's terrestrial paradise. He was wont to say, that no man need stir beyond that, in order to be perfectly happy. This being the case, it will readily be imagined the kind of life Charpentier led, without entering into further details.

It was on this Palais Royal demon that innocent, pure-minded Nanette had fixed her heart, and all the hopes of her life!

She waited impatiently for an answer to her letter to Antoine. Sometimes she entertained a shadowy idea that he might yet return to her; but her good sense soon dispersed all such illusions, and all vain hopes.

After a three weeks' suspense, Nanette, on returning from the farm, at length found a letter directed to her in Antoine's well-known hand.

In a minute she had read the contents; and then, giving the letter to her mother, she turned away, to hide her tears and to keep them in.

"MADEMOISELLE,

"I will, with much pleasure, avail myself of your amiable permission to break the bonds which united us. Pray present my most distinguished com-

pliments to *madame votre mère*, and allow me to subscribe myself,

"Mademoiselle,

"With the most perfect esteem,

"Your very devoted servant,

"ANTOINE CHARPENTIER,

"*Capitaine au —ème de ligne.*"

Such was the epistle which poor Nanette had waited for, received, and read.

It must not be imagined that it was the production of Charpentier: he had merely copied it. An ally of his, reporter to a newspaper, writer of several rejected comedies, and author of several unpublished romances, having been applied to by the Captain, indited the letter, after having duly heard the case, and read Nanette's touching composition.

Antoine was delighted with the reporter's epistle; he not knowing what on earth to write to his *ex-fiancée*. The price he paid for it was the giving up Nanette's letter to the scribe who wrote the answer to it; the said scribe putting it carefully by, as he intended to dovetail it into his next novel.

It soon became known in the village that Nanette had released Antoine from his promise of marriage, and that she was free.

Faithful Arsène Potier, on hearing the news, felt that, after all, he might have a chance with his beloved. The idea so elated him, that he was fearful of taking any steps towards making his happiness sure, lest a decided "*no*" on the part of Nanette, should for ever destroy his new-born hopes.

Without saying anything on the subject next his heart, the miller began to pay more frequent visits to the veuve Langlois' cot than he had hitherto done. He likewise began, by degrees, to carry little gifts with him: first of all for the widow, then for Nanette; also to make himself of use in various little ways; and, moreover, after some months' visiting, to linger about near Harivel's farm, in order to walk home with Nanette after her hard day's work.

It was settled in the village circles that Arsène had decidedly taken Antoine's place with Nanette; or that, at all events, it would not be very long before he did so.

It is said, that there is no surer time for catching a heart than the moment in which it has met with a disappointment.

According to this saying, Potier had well chosen his time for winning Nanette.

Nanette, however, was too much taken up with battling against her feelings for Charpentier, to take

much heed of Arsène, farther than feeling grateful for his kindness to her mother and herself.

After Nanette had received Antoine's last letter, and that she saw that his love was for ever gone, she resolutely burnt all his letters, without again reading them; likewise giving her silver-embroidered cap to the flames, and throwing the garnet ring her lover had given her into the river that turned Arsène's mill.

She took her wedding garments into wear, and returned the gold cross to Maître Charpentier.

"*C'en est fait*," she said with a long sigh, when she had destroyed all outward remembrance of the love of her girlhood.

A sentimental young lady might have moped over such disappointment as poor Nanette's, until she had pined herself into one of the thin, cold, miserable old maids, one meets with from time to time; and who have—"met with a disappointment in youth."—Of this one is informed in an under tone, accompanied by a smile. They are poor old cheerless women, to be pitied in every sense of the word.

Nanette considered it to be her duty neither to be cast down, discontented, nor pining.

"Everything is for the best to the righteous; if not in this world, at least in that which is to come. This grief is no doubt for my good: I must bear it

patiently, but not indulge it so as to become sombre, and unfit for everything."

Nanette acted up to these thoughts of hers, doing all in her power to banish Antoine from her mind.

The curé, into whose ears the sorrows of all his parishioners were poured, gave Nanette good and kind advice; encouraging her in the course she had taken, as well as duly lauding her sense of right, and her duteous efforts.

Potier seeing himself encouraged by the widow, and not discouraged by Nanette, made up his mind to speak. He first secured Madame Langlois' consent; which she gave with tears, smiles, and a loud kiss on each of Arsène's cheeks.

The miller waited for Nanette near the farm. "The moment has arrived! *Allons! courage!*" he cried, thumping his wide breast, when he saw Nanette shut the farmyard gate and come forth. "It is far worse than Monte Notte," he added, clearing his throat and stepping towards her, as Tonton barked for joy and ran before Nanette.

This faithful creature was wont, evening after evening, to trot off to farmer Harivel's; to lay himself down beneath the wall, waiting for Nanette to appear; greeting her with capers and loud barking when she did so.

"You look tired, Mam'selle Nanette: you work too hard, I fear," said Arsène timidly, as he walked beside her. "It is time you took some rest."

"I am afraid it is impossible, Monsieur Arsène: my mother has no one to look to, but me; and she must want for nothing, so long as I am able to work for her."

"Mam'selle Nanette, you have the heart of an angel." Nanette laughed at these words of the miller, whilst he was inwardly finishing his speech by a mental remark very disparaging to Captain Charpentier.

After a silence, Potier suddenly exclaimed:

"*Tenez*, Mam'selle Nanette!" then made a pause; then struck his breast as though to encourage himself, and said boldly; "It is no use going on holding one's tongue for ever! I have loved you from my boyhood, and I have never loved any one but you, *foi d'honnête homme!* Give me your friendship in return, Mam'selle Nanette, and be my wife. I swear to make you happy: you shall never repent taking me for your husband as long as you live!"

Nanette stopped and looked at Arsène. A thousand thoughts rushed through her mind; she stood still without being able to speak.

Arsène involuntarily hid his maimed hand in his breast.

"It is not that, *mon bon Arsène: that* does you honour!" said Nanette, guessing his thoughts.

"Thank heaven!" cried Potier. "I will leave you now, Mam'selle Nanette: think over what I have said; and try to love me."

With these words Arsène walked quickly away; Nanette regaining her home, to tell her mother what had taken place; and with her to talk the matter over.

The widow was enchanted; and, of course, said everything she could think of in support of Arsène's cause.

Nanette, seeing that her mother's heart was set on her marriage with Potier, reflected seriously on the subject. She told herself that perhaps Arsène loved her, as well as she had loved Charpentier; and that it would therefore be cruel of her to refuse him, and to make him suffer as she had suffered for Antoine. She moreover reflected that both her mother and Potier wished for the marriage; and that, as she had the greatest regard and respect for him, it would be selfish to bury herself in the remembrance of faithless Charpentier, thus rendering both her mother and her lover unhappy.

" I shall never see Antoine again : he is an officer now, and his heart has changed. Arsène is so good and kind, and so faithful, how can I do otherwise than make him happy ? I cannot love him as I did Antoine : that would be impossible ; but I can give him my friendship, and be a dutiful wife to him."

On hearing Nanette's decision from her own lips, honest Potier's heart overflowed with happiness.

" Ah ! Nanette, Nanette, thank you, thank you !" was all that he could say ; whilst Nanette's conscience loudly told her that she had done right.

The sight of Arsène's manly happiness, greatly helped to banish from her mind the recollection of Antoine and of all the misery she had undergone on his account.

The image of her first love would, however, appear before her from time to time ; she striving hard to drive it away, by the consideration of Arsène, and of all his kindness.

When the miller appeared before l'Abbé Berton on the subject of the banns to be published between himself and Nanette, the good curé was sitting in his brick-floored parlour, playing on the violoncello ; that being his recreation and the sweetener of his toil.

Daridolle's late villa had been sold to a retired *fa-*

bricant from Rouen ; a worthy man, though somewhat too proud of the wealth he had made.

With this *fabricant*, M. Lemercier, and with his sons, the curé was wont to execute severe music, now and then when at leisure : but that, as may be imagined, was not often.

As Potier stepped into the room, made his bow, and smoothed his hair with his hand, the rumbling of the curé's violoncello ceased ; when the priest, sticking the bow in the strings, tenderly placed it in the corner.

" *Eh bien, mon ami !*" he said smilingly to the miller, " what can I do for you ? Sit down and let me hear !" Potier had soon told his errand.

" I am glad to hear what you tell me. Nanette is the most sensible, the best-hearted, and the most religious of my parishioners. I hope you will be happy together for many a long year, *mon ami.*"

With these words, the curé looked benignantly on Potier ; who, saying that he hoped M. le curé would honour them by being present at their wedding-dinner, took his departure : the sound of l'Abbé Berton's gruff violoncello speedily following his exit.

There was no one who rejoiced more over Nanette's happy prospects than poor old Maître Charpentier.

He had sorely felt his son's neglect of his *fiancée*, as well as her altered looks and forced serenity, consequent on *M. le Capitaine's* conduct.

The old Potiers were overjoyed at Arsène's happiness ; he working with renewed vigour, and cheering his labour with a merry whistle, all in honour of Nanette.

It was arranged that he was to have the mill, with the house attached ; whilst his father and mother, together with the veuve Langlois, should take up their abode in a cottage not five minutes' walk from the mill.

The Harivels had determined on giving the wedding-dinner ; as a token, they said, of their friendship and respect for Nanette, their faithful, hard-working servant. The *fabricant* M. Lemercier and his wife had charged themselves with her *trousseau* and portion.

The time was at hand : all things were in readiness for the approaching wedding ; even Captain Charpentier had been informed, by his father, of the intended union between Potier and Nanette.

" *Ce qui se ressemble s'assemble !*" quoth the captain : "a miller and a farm-servant ; a very proper match. I wasn't going to marry a woman who churns, milks cows, and ploughs. *Je t'en souhaite !* With my rank

and appearance I can choose where I like; and *if* I marry I'll do it well.

"S'il faut faire une folie,
Que ce ne soit pas pour rien!"

As Charpentier sang the above words, he thought on the time when *he* was about to marry Nanette; told himself that she was then a "*diablement*" pretty girl; that he himself was in those days an ignorant looby, and so dismissed the matter from his mind.

It was on a lovely morning in June that Arsène Potier and Nanette Langlois were made man and wife.

There was not a single cloud visible on the face of the dark blue heavens on that serene morning. The golden sun shone with an Apollo-like splendour on hill and vale, on river, on meads, and even on the dazzling dusty high-road. The dark-green foliage of the trees stood out softly but distinctly against the smooth azure of the warm sky; whilst the gilt cock on the steeple cross sparkled as though trying to look his best in honour of the wedding about to take place in the church beneath him.

Potier arose from slumber on that happy morning, his heart overflowing with a tranquil, durable joy.

Nanette's heart too was happier than it had been

for many a long day. She felt a grateful tenderness for Arsène ; though her affection for him was rather friendship than love : far different from the feeling of ardour which had possessed her when she was on the eve of becoming Antoine's bride.

However, she was happy and cheerful. As for her mother, any one would have supposed that *she* was the bride : so hilarious, brisk, noisy, and smartly dressed was she.

There were many friends present, both from Nanette's native village, as well as from Saen.

The assemblage made a goodly show of scarlet and of blue petticoats, of snow-white caps, of gold crosses, and of gay neckerchiefs ; whilst among the men, high stiff shirt collars, square-cut smooth-hair, and merry, roguish looks were rife.

Although the widow and her daughter had worked hard and fared scantily in their mud-wall cot, still they felt a certain degree of regret on leaving it ; it was like parting with an old friend.

On arriving at the church of Saen, the laughter and merriment of the wedding cortège ceased ; and every one walked reverently towards the altar.

Before it stood the Abbé Berton vested in a surplice and a white stole ; with two clerks and the witnesses.

Maître Charpentier had petitioned to be allowed to give the bride away; and there he was ready to do his office: a fragile grasshopper-looking old man, with trembling voice and feeble gait.

The curé began the service, in the soft, short-breathed voice appertaining to those who are fat and good-natured.

After the bride and bridegroom had pledged their troth to each other, the priest joined their right hands; and after reciting the appointed words in Latin, he sprinkled them with holy water.

This being done, Potier placed the wedding-ring, together with some gold and silver coin, on the book. The curé blessed the ring; sprinkled it with holy water in the shape of a cross; then gave it to the bridegroom, who, on receiving it, presented the coin to his bride with the accustomed words; after which he placed the ring on her thumb, then on her forefinger, on her middle finger, and on her third finger. As the bridegroom placed the ring on the thumb and on the two adjoining fingers, he named holy names; far too holy to be read on the page of a mere tale; when he put it on the ring-finger he said "*amen*," and there left it.

The curé then proceeded with the service; the bystanders attending reverently, and as reverently

leaving the church when the ceremony had been brought to a close.

The whole company adjourned to Farmer Harivel's, where the wedding-feast was spread out; and a solid and plentiful feast it was.

Arsène and his wife sat side by side; the curé taking his place between the farmer and the *fermière*.

It was refreshing to leave the heat and dazzle without for the large, cool, twilight room where the dinner was laid out.

All the broad Norman faces around the board were full of glee; whilst their accents, as broad as their faces, were merry and lively.

As long, however, as the Abbé Berton remained with them, there was a respectful restraining of everything noisy or boisterous.

The curé looked benevolently about him as he eat; his napkin pinned on his right shoulder, whilst the other end was tucked into his broad sash beneath his left arm: the said sash resolutely refusing to sit in its proper place, the stoutness of the good old priest pushing it up over his breast.

The Abbé said grace, and retired as the dessert appeared; every one rising, bowing, and courtesying, as he left the room; whilst the farmer gave him his hat, and conducted him to the outer door.

At dessert, the merriment of the company burst out in full force. Then followed the ball in the barn; the supper; the conducting the bride and bridegroom home; and then the ball in continuation, till the break of day.

On the following Sunday, called "*le beau dimanche de la mariée,*" Arsène Potier and his wife appeared at high mass, sitting in the place of honour. The "*pain bénit*" having been handed to the bride before any one else present; she, according to custom, fastened a favour to the button-hole of the bearer, as well as to the basket containing the bread.

No sooner did the miller and his newly-married wife appear beneath the arch of the wide church door, as they departed arm-in-arm after mass, than a discharge of fire-arms took place; all the young bachelors of the parish having assembled to fire the feu-de-joie; whilst one of supple tongue and ready wit, stept up to the bride, presenting her with a splendid bouquet; at the same time making a little speech, wherein he offered congratulations, in his best style, on her marriage, in the name of himself and all the parish.

Nanette having kindly and modestly replied to this discourse, all present followed her and her husband to the mill, where a merry dinner took place;

at which all those met together who had not been present at the marriage-feast.

Singing and dancing in the orchard followed the dinner; the veuve Langlois dancing as lightly as any young girl there present: and, moreover, never being in want of a partner.

Night put an end to the merriment of the "*recro*," as this kind of second wedding is called. Nanette was duly installed in her new home; Arsène declaring that the mill sounded more hilariously than formerly, from the time she set her foot in his house.

The veuve Langlois and the old Potiers were delighted with their cottage: as for Tonton, he had been allowed freely to choose his own abode; wherefore, as he had always looked upon himself to be the widow's own particular dog, he paired off with her to her new quarters.

We must now return to Captain Charpentier.

Napoleon having become Emperor in 1804, he in that year made a grand distribution of crosses of the Legion of Honour, at the camp of Boulogne. Charpentier's regiment formed a part of the force there assembled, and the Captain was present with his corps.

He was beginning to grow weary of soldier life

and hardships. Like as the ancient army became corrupted at Capua, so had Charpentier become thoroughly spoilt at Paris. It is a hacknied simile; but it was as I have said, with the Captain.

He felt no enthusiasm as regarded invading England; neither was he violently and devotedly attached to the Emperor. No, he loved himself, and none but himself; and he loved pleasure for the sake of the delight it gave to that dear self.

Charpentier's old friend Colonel Langeval was, as well as himself, at Boulogne. The Colonel had become Général de Brigade, with a command at Boulogne; and his daughter Mlle. Zoé, now a handsome girl of eighteen, was with her father.

Mlle. Zoé had not forgotten her first love. On again beholding him, her childish passion burst out with tenfold greater ardour than ever; whilst Charpentier looked with favourable eyes on the young lady.

Langeval had taken the captain into town to dine at his house, and to assist at a ball; of which Zoé did the honours with great aplomb and address. She was a strange being; spoilt, forward, capricious, kind, and head-strong. At that ball, Charpentier had no difficulty in perceiving that he was adored by Mlle. Zoé, and that it only depended upon him to

become her husband. Every one saw this as plainly as he did.

Langeval's father, the old manufacturer of Lyons, had died, leaving all his vast property to his son; with the exception of an independent fortune bequeathed to spoilt Zoé, her grandfather's idol.

The camp at Boulogne was suddenly broken up. The men had been embarked, as though the moment had really arrived in which they were to sail for England. They were as suddenly disembarked, grumbling sorely at the cold water which had been thus dashed on their hopes.

However, a proclamation being read, in which war with Austria and Russia was announced, the army shouted itself into good-humour; looking forward with delight to this new expedition.

Mlle. Zoé did not look forward to it with the same delight that the soldiers did. She threw herself, bitterly weeping, into her father's arms; declaring that if Charpentier were allowed to depart she should most infallibly die.

The general kissed his daughter, informing her that she would soon forget the captain; and that he had a charming match in view for her with Jules Champavert, her handsome young cousin.

This intelligence only caused Zoé to wring her

hands; to stamp her little feet against the floor; to vow that she detested Jules, who was to be a horrible doctor; and that if her father did not, then and there, promise that she should marry Charpentier, she would assuredly kill herself.

The general sat down; and, taking his daughter on his knee, he tried in vain to make her listen to reason.

This conduct only exasperated Mlle. Zoé. She sprang away from the general; took his sword down from the nail on which it hung, drew it, and pressing the sharp point against her breast, whilst the hilt rested against the wall, she solemnly swore to throw herself on the shining, triangular blade, unless her father as solemnly swore that she should forthwith marry Charpentier.

"But he is too old for you, my dear Zoé," said the tall, stout general submissively, as he stood trembling at a respectful distance from his froward child.

"*Jures! ou je me tue*," cried Zoé, stamping, and shaking her little clenched hand at her father.

"*Ma chérie, mon ange*, listen!"

"*Jures! ou je me tue.*"

"Suppose Captain Charpentier should refuse?"

"*Jures! ou je me tue.*"

"But Zoé——"

"*Jures! vilain papa, ou je me tue.*"

"Zoé, dear Zoé, put down that sword."

"*Là! tu vois; gros méchant papa!*"

Mlle. Zoé had actually pressed hard enough on the blade, to draw blood from her soft, white bosom.

The general rushed to her, and caught her in his arms.

The sword fell to the ground, and Langeval wiped the perspiration from his forehead, as he said meekly, "*embrasses moi, mon enfant.*"

The spoilt child clasped her hands; without, however, kissing her parent: she well knew those words of his, which always meant, "do exactly as you like."

"*Gentil petit père!*" she cried, as she danced about him; then pushing him by the shoulder, she added, "Now go to Captain Charpentier, and make haste back again!"

The general sighed as he put on his sword and hat, and sallied forth to do Mlle. Zoé's little commission.

Langeval, though he thought Charpentier a very good companion, did not consider him to be precisely the sort of person who would make a worthy husband.

"Ah! my little Zoé," he said to himself, pacing towards the camp; "my only hope is that the captain may refuse you, and hold to it! It's all very pret-

ty in a play, when a rattling rogue of a roué loves a young lady who adores him; and when he, holding her hand, announces that he is suddenly reformed by the gift of that hand. The curtain falls; the audience departs; the reformed rake goes home to supper; and there the matter ends. It is far different in real life. All the marriages in the world would never reform that libertine captain; and I really believe it is his dissipated, jaunty ways that make Zoé like him! I have spoilt that child; and now I have not the courage to refuse her, though I know I am wrong in what I am about to do.

"*Sacrédi!* I could charge a battery; but by heaven I have not the moral courage to say '*no*' to a little girl."

On arriving at the camp, the general soon reached Charpentier's tent; before the door of which stood a little ricketty table, and a couple of rough straw-bottomed chairs. On one of these Charpentier was seated, with unbuttoned coat and waistcoat, cards in hand. On the other chair sat a smooth-cheeked young man, who had but just joined the regiment from the military college in Paris. He likewise held cards, on which his eyes were bent; whilst he frowned, touching first one card then the other with a puzzled air, as though quite uncertain which it be-

hoved him to play. Charpentier stroked his large black moustache, eyeing the young officer furtively, and carelessly humming an air as he did so.

General Langeval thought that he had never beheld a more disreputable-looking specimen of a soldier than Captain Charpentier. He felt inclined to return home and brave his spoilt child; but his courage failed, and he stood irresolute.

Just then the young officer smote his own head with his fist, and pushed over a couple of napoleons to Charpentier; who, dropping them into his waistcoat pocket, told his adversary he should have his revenge in the evening, and that meanwhile they would go and regale themselves at a restaurateur's in the town.

The young man had lost twenty napoleons; the largest sum he had ever played away in half an hour. He looked undecided as to whether he should cry or swear, or both; wherefore the appearance of the stately general was a relief to him, as it served to occupy Charpentier, whilst he stole away to compose his irritated feelings.

The general seated himself on the chair the young officer had left; Charpentier buttoned up his uniform, and asked after Mlle. Zoé.

Langeval, thinking all round-about words and al-

lusions quite unnecessary with his daughter's idol, very briefly and dryly asked him if he felt inclined to become his son-in-law.

Charpentier shrugged his shoulders, raised his eyebrows, and was silent awhile.

Until he spoke, Langeval felt as some persons are apt to feel when the dentist, having looked into their mouth, turns away to make ready the instrument which is to lift a tooth from its socket.

The captain at length spoke; saying, that as he had naught on earth but his pay and his sword, it would be highly necessary that the young lady the general wished to do him the honour of bestowing on him, should be furnished with a suitable "*dot*;" and that if she should be so furnished, he should be enchanted to become her husband.

Charpentier knew very well the whole state of Langeval's affairs; and asked nothing better than to marry Mdlle. Zoé—quit the service—take an apartment in Paris—and lead a life of pleasure.

The general and the captain soon came to an understanding; returning together to the house of the former; when Zoé was raised to the summit of happiness on her father presenting Charpentier to her as her "*futur*."

There is no joy, however, without alloy.

The captain could not quit his regiment, then under orders for Austria; he was, therefore, obliged to march on the following morning with the rest of the "*chair à canon;*" as Napoleon was wont to call his soldiers.

Zoé passed the day of her lover's departure in tears and pettish grief; his affecting adieu ringing in her ears; his moustache, fiery eyes, and scarred forehead engraven on her heart.

As for General Langeval, he could not help thinking what a comfort it would be if the captain should fall on the field of glory, and leave Zoé to marry her cousin, Jules Champavert—settle down as a doctor's wife, and forget the follies of her youth.

That same Jules Champavert weighed heavily on his spirits. The match between the cousins was of the general's own making, with a view to his child's happiness; the young man adored Zoé, looking on her as his future wife; and now Langeval saw himself under the necessity of declaring that his daughter was engaged to another man.

"It would do charmingly in a vaudeville, but it is the devil himself in real life. *Bah!* I'll wait a little, and see how the Captain makes out among the Austrian bullets. It would be a pity to vex poor Jules for nothing!"

This thought somewhat consoled the general, by the vague hope it held out to him.

Zoé's next phase of grief was shown by playing all day long the march which had sounded at the head of Charpentier's regiment as it left Boulogne.

The general was perfectly weary of the tune: it rung in his ears, even in his sleep, just as Zoé was wont to execute it; to wit: piano, pianissimo—crescendo—fortissimo—diminuendo pianissimo—perdendosi!

To the general, the tune gave no idea but that of a troublesome, boring air; to Zoé it represented the band of Charpentier's regiment drawing near, and then departing; whilst she could, as she played it, even see the rapparee captain leading his company.

Langeval was too kind to put a stop to the odious march, but he was delighted when it was broken through by a letter from Charpentier to Zoé; which letter she answered, and was for ever reading. The little eccentricities of spelling, in which her lover indulged, were overlooked by her; she only dwelt on his fine phrases,—the very same which he had formerly written to Nanette, as well as to many more, and which he had now furbished up for his new series of love-letters.

Letter after letter continued to arrive, containing

accounts of the various events of Napoleon's first campaign as an Emperor.

In due time came an epistle, bearing tidings of the great fight of Austerlitz, and written in Charpentier's best style of exaggeration.

Zoé flew with it to all her female allies; every one of whom was her confidante, and the depository of her secret thoughts.

The letter set forth how the great day had dawned in fog and mists; how these had been chased away by the glorious "sun of Austerlitz," and how French valour had thundered down upon and beaten the allies. It moreover went on to say how Charpentier had taken a colour; had received a bad gunshot wound through the breast as he did so; had been spoken to by Napoleon himself; had been by him promoted to the grade of lieutenant-colonel on the field of battle; concluding by the intoxicating news that he was about to return to France on sick-leave; and that he should soon embrace his beloved Zoé.

"*Diable!* how the bullets have respected him!" thought Langeval; as his daughter struck up the objectionable march, together with a wild medley of dance tunes and other gay airs.

Captain Charpentier was soon at Boulogne; when the poor general saw himself under the cruel necessity

of getting matters in readiness for his daughter's marriage, as well as of writing to Jules Champavert to inform him of the state of affairs between Charpentier and Zoé.

Jules Champavert disturbed the serenity of the love-making horizon, by suddenly appearing at Boulogne in great wrath and dolor. He reproached Zoé; told the general that he deemed him to be as weak as a babe; and challenged Charpentier. His cousin laughed at him; Langeval bore his taunts meekly; whilst Charpentier politely informed him that it was utterly impossible for an Austerlitz colonel to fight a sucking doctor without a beard: a child, who did not wear the uniform of the empire!

Jules found himself in a minority; though Langeval's heart leant towards him.

The young doctor was forced to swallow his sorrow, together with his anger; and Mlle. Zoé was united to the love of her heart, so soon as he had recovered from the effects of his dangerous wound.

The marriage was by civil contract only; Zoé, having been brought up in childhood without any notion of religion beyond that of the Goddess Reason, agreed with her lover in considering all religious ceremonies as so many "*capucinades;*" which it was

spirited and strong-minded to laugh at, and to set her face against.

The easy general had no voice in the matter; wherefore the hôtel-de-ville and subsequent rejoicings were the order of the day.

Zoé's dress had been to her a matter of great moment. Very short-waisted and long-tailed was that garment, and composed of white satin and lace; the republican horror for such materials, as well as for silk, velvet, and rich colours, having worn off.

As far as costume went, *the* empire was decidedly a most miserable epoch. It has an unmistakeable stamp of its own: you can even tell a coffee-cup or a footstool of that period; there is a kind of elegance about objects of that era, yet with a *cur-classical* air, which has never existed, save in France during the reign of "the Little Corporal."

Having espoused Mlle. Zoé Langeval, Colonel Charpentier beheld himself in possession of a good fortune, besides a pretty wife, and a respectable grade in the army.

The reins were in his hand, either to drive on to successful futurity; or to overturn himself into a dirty ditch.

The colonel's first move, after his marriage, was to exchange with the commanding officer of a grena-

dier regiment then quartered in Paris ; a man as desirous to be at the seat of war, as Charpentier was to escape from it.

This affair being concluded, Colonel and Mme. Charpentier engaged a charming apartment in Paris, not far from the Tuileries ; besides a box at the Vaudeville : this latter having been from her childhood one of Zoé's items in her idea of perfect happiness.

The honeymoon passed away quickly, and without a cloud. Before it was over, the colonel did, to be sure, begin to feel a little weary of Zoé's intense love and admiration for him ; but he determined to be her devoted slave for one short month ; then take his own way for ever after.

Accordingly the honeymoon was no sooner over than the colonel announced to his adoring wife that he must henceforth attend a little more regularly to his regimental duties than he had done since his marriage.

Mme. Charpentier lauded her Antoine for his military zeal ; which zeal at the end of six months' time seemed entirely to possess him : so thought Zoé ; her husband being out all day, and sometimes even all night, in the supposed pursuit of his duty.

Then began matrimonial uneasiness. Mme. Charpentier reproached Antoine, sometimes angrily, some-

times with tears, for his long absences. The colonel would kiss her; or shrug his shoulders, humming a tune; or he would swear, stamp his foot, and tell her to hold her tongue: all according to the temper he chanced to be in. If he had been successful at play his humour would be smooth and gay; if he had lost, or if over eating and drinking had touched his digestion, he would be irritable and diabolical.

The colonel having returned betimes one morning, after a night passed from home, Zoé, in her peignoir and night-cap, sought his apartment, and there opened a volley of violent reproaches and angry words on her husband.

He, red-eyed, feverish, and irritable, told her to *go to the devil*, and not to interfere with him; as he was his own master, and would not be any one's slave; much less the slave of his wife.

Charpentier then, with a barrack-yard oath, threw his empty purse on the table, and tore off his coat, calling loudly for his servant to shave and dress him.

His wife, never having beheld such violence before, gasped, stared, and presently fell into an "*attaque de nerfs.*"

"*Bah, bêtise!*" cried the colonel, contemptuously, "it won't do to encourage scenes. Here, François, call Galatée, and help her to carry madame off

to her own room. Let her have a good dose of orange-flower water; and you make haste back to shave me!"

Behold Antoine Charpentier, son of the village schoolmaster of St. Eloy, seated in a soft cushioned chair of classical design; all lions' claws, scrolls, and griffins! Behold him arrayed in a silken dressing-gown, his cheeks and chin lathered and shaved by a thin slip of a servant; his moustache combed and oiled by the same. Anon, view him enjoying the soft comfort of a warm bath; reading the paper and dozing, as the water relaxed the feverish tension of nerve which a night of ill-luck at play had cursed him with.

In due time, dressed and refreshed, the colonel was to be seen in the barrack square, chatting and laughing with his officers; his horse led to and fro by an orderly, whilst the soldiers sauntered about ready to fall in for parade.

Charpentier, though somewhat too fat, yet looked well on horseback; in all the glory of bearskin, gorget, well-fitting uniform, and high boots.

He was about mounting his horse, when a pair of arms were thrown around him; whilst a well-known tender voice sounded in his astonished ears.

"My son, my son! my dear Antoine," it cried, "I

shall now die happy. I have seen you with a decoration on your breast: I have seen you an officer of the Emperor's. Excuse my tears, gentlemen, but this is the brightest day I ever beheld: and Heaven be praised that I have lived till now!"

The officers, thus addressed, bowed respectfully to the old man who clung to the colonel.

Charpentier reddened, till his scar grew white beneath the cap that hid it from view. He roughly disengaged himself from the old man; saying sharply as he did so—

"What is this? There is some mistake!"

Then, jumping on his horse, he cried to the orderly, "Conduct that *particulier* into the street. I know nothing of him. Take his address; and tell him I am not to be interrupted here."

The drum beat for the men to fall in. The colonel cantered to his post; whilst the orderly, who was a kind-hearted fellow, gently told the old man he must depart.

Poor Maître Charpentier—for it was he—cast one long look on his son, who sat erect viewing the line of men before him; then, with streaming eyes and breaking heart, he quitted the barrack-yard.

"I must have your address for our colonel, *mon pauvre vieux*," cried the orderly, stopping him.

"Tell him I am going to the grave!"

"*Tiens, que c'est drôle!*" exclaimed the young soldier, staring compassionately after the poor old man; and mechanically settling his sword-belt as he gazed.

"*That's* our colonel's papa. He ought to have embraced him, and to have presented him to the other *épaulettiers*, saying, 'Gentlemen, this is my old father: he is worthy of your respect; and I am not ashamed to own that I have risen from the ranks!' That's what he should have done, our colonel: but he is an *animal*, and not *à la hauteur la de situation.* I wish *my* old father would come and see *me;* sabots, blouse, and all. *I'd* show that dog of a colonel an example. Ah!"

The orderly despised the colonel; so likewise did his officers.

Charpentier began to think it a degradation to have sprung from an honest old countryman; though he thought it none to be living steeped up to his chin in vice; or publicly to deny the father who loved him better than his life.

The poor old schoolmaster, on hearing from Antoine that he was with his newly-married wife at Paris, and that he was moreover in command of a grenadier regiment there, had determined on going

to the capital; there to see his son, the colonel, in all his glory.

Maître Charpentier, in the simplicity of his heart, had never deemed it possible that Antoine could be ashamed of, or deny his father. On the morning after his arrival in Paris, the schoolmaster had arrayed himself in his Sunday suit: the very same in which he appeared at church, to play on the serpent; then, with proud and happy heart, he had sought the barracks of his son's regiment. People laughed at the odd-looking old man as he shambled along; but he was too intent on the idea of seeing his son to notice aught around him. He looked on Colonel Charpentier from a distance, as that worthy conversed with his officers; pleasing his paternal soul with thoughts of the elevated rank to which his "little Antoine" had risen.

At length, being quite unable to contain his feelings, he rushed past the sentry, to embrace his son; and to be received as we have seen.

The colonel felt something like a very faint twinge of conscience, when the orderly reported the answer the old man had given, on being asked for his address.

However, Charpentier felt it but for an instant.

"It is his own fault," he thought; "he should not have shown himself here by way of a surprise. He

should have known his place better, *pardi!* If he had written to announce his intention, I might have taken measures accordingly; but suddenly to fall from the moon in that way: oh! it's *too* bad."

As for Maître Charpentier, he hurried along, devouring his tears; proceeded to the little inn, in the high, narrow street, where he had slept the night before ;paid his reckoning, and so set off to the diligence office; where he arrived just in time to start by the latest diligence that left Paris for Rouen.

The journey home seemed to the poor old man to be one long moment, in which he continued repeating to himself: "He has denied me: he has denied me!"

It was very late when Maître Charpentier was set down at the village of St. Eloy.

His limbs were stiff and weary; his head confused; his heart aching.

He hobbled across the fields to his cottage still repeating: "He has denied me: he has denied me!" staring mournfully at the stars without seeing them; Antoine, as he mounted his horse and cantered off, being the only object imprinted on his brain; whilst his son's harsh voice and hard words seemed incessantly to sound in his ears.

The schoolmaster mechanically opened his cot-

tage door; struck a light; and put food on his table.

As he sat eating, without knowing that he did so, his eyes rested on Colonel Charpentier's *briquet*, with its worsted tassel, which hung on the wall; and which was kept bright and clean by Maître Charpentier, who looked upon it with the greatest pride and affection. On now beholding it, the poor old man started, moaned; and then, stifled by tears and sobs, hid his face in his shrivelled, trembling hands.

"Antoine, Antoine!" he said, "I shall die: your cruelty will have brought me to the grave."

Maître Charpentier tottered shivering to his bed; never again to leave it.

His old friends, Nanette and her mother, nursed him carefully and tenderly; the parish priest strove all in his power to console him. The schoolmaster in feeble voice thanked them; his sad eyes saying more than his tongue: but from day to day he pined and drooped, until, in one short month after his son had turned his face from him, the poor old broken-hearted father passed away; forgiveness of Antoine on his quivering, dying lips.

Before dying, Maître Charpentier had made a will, whereby he left his cottage to Nanette Potier.

She, still true to her conscience, deemed that she

had no real right to the property; that her old friend had made his will in consequence of Colonel Charpentier's ill-conduct; but that she should not be justified in acting upon it.

"What do you think about it, *mon ami?*" she enquired of her husband the miller, as she sat knitting before the door; whilst he, work being over, smoked his pipe, and looked at her.

"It was very kind of Maître Charpentier," she added, plying her bright, polished needles; "but conscience says we should not take advantage of that kindness."

"I tell you what, *ma femme;* there is no safer guide than your good conscience; let us destroy the will and allow Antoine to walk into his property."

This was no sooner said than done.

Potier wrote an official kind of letter to the colonel, announcing his father's death to him; to which the officer replied in due course, begging the miller to sell the cottage for him; and presenting his compliments to Madame Potier in a postscript.

The miller being well off, with money in hand, bethought him that he could not do better than invest a part of it in the purchase of Charpentier's cottage with a bit of ground attached; containing about a dozen fine apple-trees. He accordingly put

the business into the hands of a fair-dealing lawyer, agreeing to give for his intended purchase whatever might be deemed a fitting price.

The affair being satisfactorily brought to an end, Potier saw himself in possession of the schoolmaster's cottage, so well known to him from childhood: thus missing an opportunity of doing a "*sharp, smart,*" dishonest action, by purchasing at his own price the property confided to his care.

Oh! "*soft, flat,*" honest, honourable miller.

Colonel Charpentier having received the purchase-money of his paternal cot and acre, trebled it at rouge et noir, the moment he got hold of it.

"Now then," he said, "I've done with *that* village for ever. Let it be, by me, for ever forgotten. Success to pleasure, and a gay life; down with care, and all nonsense of that sort!"

Charpentier, to his wife's infinite disgust, soon retired from the army; having no wish ever again to quit Paris.

Zoé, in spite of a year of wedlock, and no very good conduct on her husband's part, still loved him; her passion being accompanied by a burning jealousy; the two venting themselves in scenes, tears, and reproaches: all very irritating to the colonel; and, moreover, worse than useless.

"I tell you what, Madame," he would say, "if you go on in this way you will cause me to hate you: you behave more like a silly schoolgirl than a woman of the world. The pleasures of men and women do not run in the same road: you have yours, I have mine; in the name of heaven let u sfollow them, as people of the world who know how to live. I can't be hanging about you all day, like a fool of a boy in love with the maid! Be reasonable, and do as other people do; or you will make a laughing-stock of me, as well as of yourself, *nom de mille diables!*"

Such speeches only served to make Mme. Charpentier more violent than before.

In due time a little Charpentier was born unto her. It lived but a few days; and its mother had well-nigh followed it to the grave: all owing to the awful quarrels which took place between her and the colonel.

This harum-scarum husband never visited his wife in her sick-room but she questioned and cross-questioned him as to his whereabout and proceedings. This conduct on Mme. Charpentier's part led to jesting, taunting, and contempt on the colonel's; to fruitless anger from her, followed by fever and weakness, that threatened soon to end her love and jealousy for ever.

Col. Charpentier no longer cared for Zoé: in point of fact, he was tired to death of her; letting days and days pass without going near her: for over-love destroys love, as surely as the brightly shining sun puts out the flame of fire.

The colonel was fast becoming a disreputable, gambling gourmand. Three or four years sufficed to cover his person with unwholesome fat; to thicken his blood, and to dim his brain.

As love for the table grew upon him, losses at play became more frequent; the fumes of his stomach darkening the clear sharpness of sight so necessary for successful gaming.

The passion for cards, however, held its own in his breast, in spite of failures. He ever hoped to repair his losses "*this evening*." And so, after a rich dinner at a first-rate restaurant, in company of kindred spirits, men with yellow eyes and double chins, he would repair to the haunts of lean gamesters; there to win a little, and to lose a great deal.

There was not a vice which Charpentier denied himself. Soul and body were on the full gallop to destruction: and this the "*brave en retraite*" called pleasure!

Mme. Charpentier was one of those beings who

can keep neither thought nor feeling to themselves: a creature who could not exist without a confidante; a favourite, into whose ears she must needs pour all her joys and griefs; all her secrets and all her intentions: to be, by the said confidante and favourite, trumpeted forth to the long ears of gossips, eager to hear the behind-the-scenes proceedings of others, and to spread all they know, with their own additions, amendments, and commentaries.

Zoé's Parisian confidante was one Mme. Vasseur, a sly, clever, flattering, fawning, and treacherous woman; little, dark, marked with small-pox, and rouged to her very eyes. Intrigue and treachery were stamped on her visage as deeply as the small-pox mark there visible; yet giddy, blind Zoé, imagined her to be a true friend, and one who fully entered into every joy and grief of her soul.

Mme. Charpentier having conceived a great wish to show off her beautiful snowy arms and hands by playing on the harp, had sought some one who might teach her enough of that ancient instrument, to render her able to accompany her voice in "Fleuve du Tage," "Vous me quittez pour aller à la gloire," and such-like ditties of the day; in which "paladins" and troubadours most abundantly figured, all ready to die "pour la gloire et l'amour."

Mme. Vasseur was the person she lighted on, so to instruct her; and Mme. Vasseur soon became her confidante-in-chief, and prime favourite of her pupil; through flattery, complaisance, and the most thorough *savoir faire*.

The harp-mistress opened Zoé's eyes to a great deal of life till then unknown to her; brought her tidings of her faithless husband's doings; by degrees shaking Mme. Charpentier's idolatry for him, and turning her mind and heart to other objects: objects of passion and vanity, by means of which the music-mistress brought her entirely beneath her power.

Mme. Vasseur found Zoé to be a mine of wealth. Zoé never bought herself a dress or a shawl without presenting the counterpart to her confidante; besides giving her smart coral, and other diadem-combs, bracelets, ear-rings, &c.; of which fickle Zoé had become tired, so soon as she had possessed them but a brief space of time.

The harp-mistress played her part so well, that she became, after a while, indispensable *dame de compagnie* to her pupil; living daintily, lodging luxuriously, and making a little fund from the woman she was helping to ruin; as well as from the colonel, who viewed the painted iniquity with favourable eyes, to the farther depleting of his money bags: all unknown

to Zoé, who imagined that he both hated and loathed Mme. Vasseur.

Mme. Charpentier had replaced Antoine's image in her heart by the Frenchwoman's love of cachemires and diamonds. Pushed on by Mme. Vasseur, she became a complete *petite-maîtresse*, plunging into all kinds of extravagance and dissipation: "*gaiety*," as it is called. She and Col. Charpentier seldom met: when they did, they were politely indifferent. Zoé no longer cared about his doings; she had a crowd of gallants at her feet; began to think her husband quite a fallen idol: in short, a coarse, bloated, ugly man; wondering how she could ever have loved and married him.

Reckless, imprudent conduct is sure to lead, sooner or later, to the fatal day of reckoning. That day may be put off by various devices; but come at length it will, as surely as the day of death.

The Charpentiers' gallop on the road to ruin, after a good five years' run, came to a sudden check.

Their pleasure-nags dropt dead beneath them, for lack of supplies, whilst the riders fell rolling to earth.

General Langeval—who, during the five years' giddiness, had advised, reasoned with, and pitied his daughter; whilst he had reproached and quarrelled

with her husband—now gladly took Zoé to his heart; embraced her, and told her to be comforted. He paid vast sums, whereby the colonel was kept from the prison he so well deserved. The general then cast him off for ever and ever. Charpentier took all this coolly enough; brutified as he was by degrading pleasures and indulgences.

"You shall never want, *ma chérie:* that vile husband of yours will not come near you, now that you have nothing of your own. We will live together, my Zoé, and forget the past!" So spake Gen. Langeval, as he kissed his daughter's forehead.

"*Cher père!*—and Mme. Vasseur? You will not separate us!"

On hearing this, the general shook his head, and kept his ground. Not all his spoilt child's ways, whether insinuating or the contrary, could call from him the well-known "*embrasses moi, mon enfant!*"

No: for once in his life Langeval was firm; and Mme. Vasseur was forced to beat a retreat: carrying off, however, the spoil of years, and the tender regrets of her dupe Zoé Charpentier.

The general took his daughter home to a charming chateau near Lyons; once the abode of a noble family; and in which Langeval was determined to pass the remainder of his days, farming, gardening,

and studying; far from the world and all its restlessness.

Col. Charpentier felt extremely lowered, after awhile, by the loss of his fortune. Instead of being the great man he had been, feasting and feasted in turn, he had now to look on the reverse of the medal, and to behold himself, a slave to pleasure, yet debarred from it; able only to taste it in the form he loved, by being a complaisant hanger-on to the friends he had hitherto consorted with as an equal.

Charpentier's temper and manners quite unfitted him for such a character: one that demands self-restraint and complaisance.

He tried the part and failed.

He was too conceited, and too full of himself to succeed in it; wherefore his former companions turned their backs on him: as he had turned his on his father.

Instead of feeding on the fat of the land, as heretofore, weighing the merits of dishes and sauces, and pouring the best wine slowly down his throat, at choice tables; the colonel was reduced to frequenting very second-rate restaurants: to batten on *arlequins;* to feed off dirty tablecloths, spotted and tumbled; and to put up with *vin ordinaire.* Brandy took the place of select liqueurs; whilst the splendid cigars

he had been wont to smoke, were replaced by the "*tabac de caporal*" of his soldier days. His grand apartment, too, was exchanged for a little, cold, smoky room *au sixième;* in a close back street. In this room the rats held midnight revels: the colonel awoke one morning from a half drunken sleep, to find his toe-nails gnawed to the quick by the long-tailed vermin.

Charpentier did not descend to these *privations* with the grace of a philosopher: on the contrary he grumbled, swore, and bored every one to death by the recital of his misfortunes.

Like many other reduced rakes, he found brandy to be a consolation under his troubles. It deadened at one and the same time the sense of reverses and the sense of hunger. Brandy therefore he drank, and drank till he could not do without it. His clothes fell into a state of dilapidation; smart and ragged; a dreadful mixture. He still grew a moustache, and affected a military swagger; wearing the tri-coloured riband of his order, dirty and faded: the cross having been sold to pay arrears of rent.

Charpentier was decidedly reduced to great straits; yet he could not give up *pleasure* (?) and take to industrious courses.

The colonel had for a time filled the post of marker

at a black-leg billiard-table; drunkenness caused him, however, to make so many mistakes in his calling, that he was dismissed from that means of making a little money. He next undertook the underselling of theatre tickets; but in that too he failed.

Down, down, he went; yet lower and lower. In time he haunted the outside of barrack gates, and hung about guard-houses; amusing the soldiers with his tales and songs; picking up sous and old garments in return; with a bit of bread, a cigar, or a glass of brandy now and then.

Charpentier became a well-known character among the garrison of Paris; the soldiers always addressing him as "*mon colonel*," and giving him the nickname of "*Malbrouc*."

Charpentier seldom thought; he only felt: and not even that, except when he was without drink. Then he would feel all the torturing horrors of a drunkard sobered,—shivering, weeping, swearing, muttering; pitied by few; scoffed at by all.

From sheer compassion his military patrons would, at such times, give him brandy; in order to free him from the misery and nervous terror he endured, when let down from a state of drunkenness.

The effect will follow the cause, with as much certainty as night follows day; wherefore, after a cer-

tain time passed in destroying himself by drink, poor degraded "Malbrouc" was seized by a tremendous fit of delirium tremens.

The man who had had the game in his own hands; who, if he had played it aright, might have died a Marshal; lay raving and gibbering in the gutter, covered with rags, the sport and derision of the very dregs of Paris.

* * * * * * * *

Ten years had passed away since the bright summer day on which Potier the miller and Nanette Langlois had been made one.

Nanette had never once repented the step she had then taken, in obedience to the voice of her conscience. The miller, without silly fondness, was a tender and manly husband. No disputes had ever put a shadow of ill-will between himself and his wife: he, being lord; and she, giving him all respect and obedience, in womanly guise and affection.

Nanette sat beside her fire in the dusk of the evening. It was in the dark month of November: a mist was hanging over the face of heaven and earth; chill, clinging, penetrating to the very bones and marrow.

The mill was silent; the miller abroad with a load of flour; without, not a sound was to be heard.

Mme. Potier was far different in appearance from the overworked Nanette at farmer Harivel's. She was plump, smooth; her face serene and happy, without a trace of the sorrow of other days.

Her eldest child, a strong, square-built, burly boy, about eight years of age, stood before the fire, devouring a huge slice of bread and jam for supper; his sister being occupied in the same pleasant manner.

On Mme. Potier's knee sat her youngest; a little fellow between two and three years old, with *bourlet*-capped head; who ate his bread and jam, whilst his mother rubbed and warmed his pink, naked feet.

Supper having been brought to a close by a cup of milk all around, the children were undressed; and then, kneeling about their mother, said their evening prayers: the older boy being, moreover, aided by her in examining his conscience; that he might know, be ashamed of, and correct, his childish errors of that day.

Three little voices were anon to be heard, from bed, crying out:

"*Bon soir, petite mère, que le bon Dieu te bénisse!*"

The children were kissed tenderly by their mother, who again returned to her fire.

Beside it stood a goodly pipkin, full of hot pea-soup, well flavoured with leeks; wherewith the miller was to regale on returning from his misty journey.

Nanette spread the cloth, getting all things in readiness for supper; then, taking her work, she sat herself down before the crackling blaze; sewing away, and giving thanks to heaven, as she was wont to do many times a day, for the peace and happiness wherewith she was so blessed.

Her placid meditation was broken through by a sharp rap on the window-pane.

Nanette looked up, starting at that which she beheld.

Close against the window appeared the face of a beggarman. The eyes were bleared and glazed; the under-lip was swollen and purple; the upper one being covered by a thick moustache; whilst a dirty beard of some days' growth, in part hid his flabby, violet-coloured face. His hair was long, black, and matted; covered by an old red night-cap.

The beggar, in a trembling and hoarse voice, was entreating Nanette to let him in, and to allow him to warm himself at the blazing fire; as he said he was very cold; with empty stomach, and not a sou in his pocket.

Nanette's heart inclined to open her door to him; to feed and warm him: but the miller was away; she was entirely alone; and the looks of the beggar frightened her, in spite of her great charity.

"I will give you some soup from the window," she said, after reflecting a while.

"Give me a glass of brandy, more rather," returned the beggar; putting a dirty, long-nailed, trembling hand, in at the window, which Nanette had opened.

"Well, you shall have it; but will you not have the warm soup too?"

"Give me the brandy, or I shall die: we'll think about the soup afterwards."

These words of the beggar were accompanied by such a wild, eager look, that Nanette deemed him to be some poor madman, wandering about unknown to his friends.

She gave him a little glass full of brandy, which he tossed off at one gulp; then stretched out his hand, saying:

"A few of those will set me on my legs again, *bonne femme.*"

"Do you want more?" asked Nanette in surprise.

"Yes! now then make haste; but give me a larger glass: I hate drinking out of a thimble. Make haste—make haste—don't you see him?"

The man shook in every limb; vowed that the devil was standing with his arm round his waist; began to cry in maudlin manner, and to beg hard

for a good tumbler full of brandy; which, he said, was the only thing to chase the devil away.

Nanette hesitated, being afraid to give him more.

The beggar became violent, and threatened to knock the door down, if she did not give him the bottle and a large glass.

Nanette glanced towards the door, and perceived that she had fastened it with the strong wooden bolt. She likewise looked at the clock. It was nearly eight; and she knew that the miller would soon be home.

She poured out another small glass of brandy, which she gave to the beggar, saying:

"Take that, and begone. You shall have a *gros sou*, and a bit of bread besides."

The bloated man drank off the spirit; but refused to move, until Nanette should have given him more.

"The devil has been with me all day," he said, as his teeth chattered, "because I had no brandy. He breathed all over the country, and made a fog, that I should not see where to get any. He always follows me about, and makes me cold and miserable, till I drink a bottle full; and then he goes away, and I am a grenadier again—till the next time."

Nanette without another word gave the man a sou,

with some bread and cheese; then shut-to the window; drawing the little red and white checked curtain.

Anon the beggar began to shake the door, and to swear and howl; waking the children and frightening their mother.

"Give me the bottle, and I will go," cried the man.

No answer being given, he rapped with his stick, and again began to shake the strong door.

Nanette kissed her children, telling them it was only a tipsy man; and that their father would soon return.

"There he is!" cried the eldest boy, "listen!"

The sound of cart wheels was distinctly heard. The noise ceased, and presently the miller's voice resounded loudly and firmly, as he asked the beggar what he was doing there.

"Baptiste!" called Potier; and a strong, double-jointed being, covered with flour, appeared from the mill. "How could you hear all this noise, and not come to your mistress's help?" asked Potier.

"I thought it was a *lutin*, howling in the fog!" returned Baptiste, looking sheepish.

Mme. Potier stepped forth to tell all that had happened.

The miller looked at the beggar, and then said, "Bring him a good tumbler of brandy, *ma femme.*"

"A tumbler *full!*" cried Nanette, in surprise.

"Yes: I know how it is. One sees that sort of thing in the army from time to time. Here, *mon vieux*, drink that!"

The beggar spilt a part of the brandy, as his shaking hand carried the glass to his mouth.

"There; that will do. Now come along with me, and we'll find a warm bed for you. I shall be in to supper directly, Nanette."

With these words, Potier, followed by Baptiste, walked the beggar off to the mill; he begging as he went for more brandy.

In the mill a snug nest of hay was soon made, wherein the tattered and torn beggar laid him down to rest; falling asleep as he still called for a bottle of brandy, and begged for a pipe.

Baptiste locked him up safely; hung up a light in a lanthorn to bear him company, and went to rub down the horse: still haunted, as he did so, by the idea of goblins in the fog.

Potier, cold and tired, did justice to the good soup; whereof he cozily partook with his wife, before their comfortable fire, talking, as they did so, of the miserable half-crazy beggerman.

"He will sleep now," said Potier; "but when he awakes in the morning, he will cry and shiver, and be full of horror. However, we'll give him some breakfast, and enough of brandy to start him on his journey. If he left it off he would die; and if he goes on drinking, he will die: poor miserable creature. Drunkenness is not the vice of the French army; but during the time I served, *ma femme*, I have seen men just in the state of that horrible beggar!"

"It is dreadful," said Nanette, shivering. "I hope he has neither wife nor children. How bloated and purple he looked, Arsène; and there was such a wild roll in his look, as though he had no power over his eyes. I'm sure I shall dream of that man. Oh! what a degrading thing sin is; how ruining and terrible!"

On the following morning the miller and his family were about to partake of breakfast in bowls of smoking *café-au-lait;* one of which was set apart for the miserable beggar in the mill, when Baptiste, with staring eyes and terrified visage, rushed furiously into the house.

"*Ah! not' maître, not' maître,*" he cried, "come to the mill; that *misérable* is dead. *J'en peux pu'*, he

has frightened me so, ugly monster. Why couldn't he go and die somewhere else?"

Potier, followed by his wife, proceeded to the mill; Baptiste remaining with the children, and swallowing a whole bowlful of coffee to give him courage.

The miller stepped to the corner in which the bed of hay had been piled for the beggar. It was not disturbed, and on it lay the corpse of its occupier.

The body reposed on the right side; one hand was beneath the cheek, the other drawn back.

Potier felt his heart; it had ceased to beat: cold and still it was for ever. He took the hand; that was icy cold; the arm stiff as wood. The man's eyes were open and glazed; his mouth only half closed; his face dark and livid.

"He is quite dead, and must have been so for hours. We'll leave him just as he is: lock the door; and I will set off to the authorities directly," said the miller, beneath his breath.

"Arséne, do you think he has served? He has on an old uniform, and a tricoloured riband on his breast."

To this question of his wife, Potier shook his head, and made answer:

"No, *ma femme.* Don't you see he has a pair of worn-out cavalry overalls, an infantry officer's undress frock, and a private's short white gaiters? He has been a fine man in his day: I take it that too much drink at one time, and then the want of it, has killed him."

"*Pauvre malheureux*," cried Nanette, with a sigh of pity, as she cast a look on the dead body, and followed her husband out of the mill.

In the pocket of the squalid, bloated beggar's frock were found, a short and very dirty pipe, an empty tobacco-box, a couple of sous, a clasp knife, and his passport, made out for Rouen, and wrapped up in an old cotton handkerchief.

The official examination of the body having been brought to an end, the miller, with a sad countenance, returned to his wife, and sat him down beside the fire.

"*Ma femme*," he said sorrowfully, "prepare to hear something dreadful. The passport of that miserable beggar is made out in the name of Antoine Charpentier, late Colonel in the army of his Majesty *l'Empereur et Roi*; actually *chiffonnier* at Paris. I looked closely at the body, and although his are swelled through intemperance, I had difficulty in knowing them again. Besides, on

his forehead, beneath his long hair, is the scar of the wound he received in battle."

On hearing these words Nanette Potier reddened, then turned pale, looked round on her husband and children, clasped her hands together, and bowing her head over them, said gently, "Oh! righteous heaven, from what a man, from what a fate, hast thou not in thy goodness saved me!"

Charpentier's miserable fate, together with his death, saddened the miller and his wife for a time. The cloud, however, passed away by degrees, leaving them in the bright sunshine of happiness: a well-deserved happiness, solidly founded on religion and all the good therein contained; and which never left them during the remainder of their long and peaceful journey through life.

Nanette would ofttimes repeat the poor curé's words, of which she so deeply felt the truth: "Every thing is for the best to the righteous; if not in this world, at least in that which is to come."

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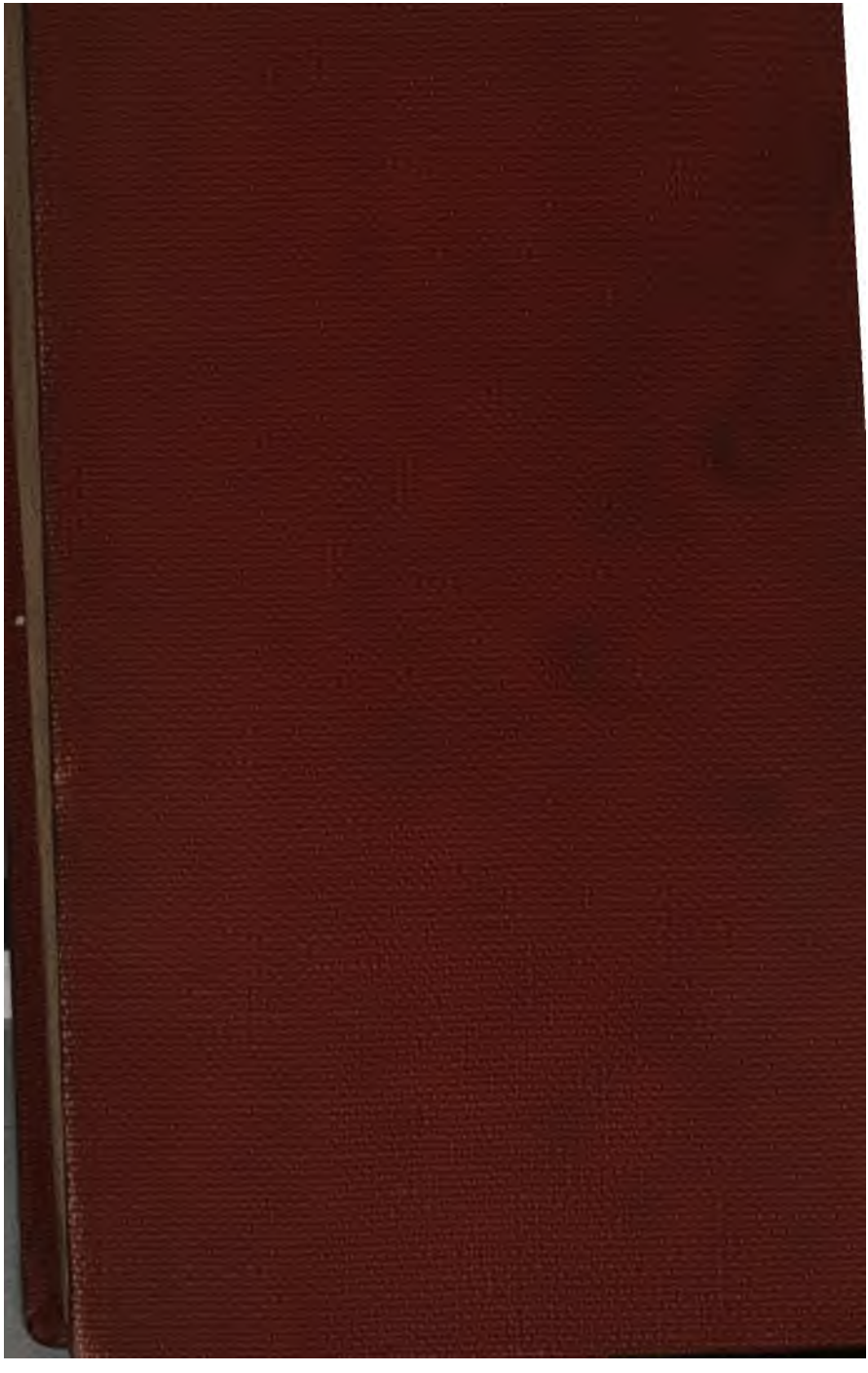
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